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AND
DRAWING ROOM
MISCELLANY.

JANUARY

1865.

ONE SHILLING.

A COMPANION

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BY G. H. WALLACE.

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Are the sounds and the patter of restless feet,
And the clasp of a hand that is warm and young,
And the lisping joy of a guileless tongue,
And the taste of a by-gone glory;
And a something my spirits would fain unravel
Of a dim-remembered story.

A winding lane on a summer's day,
And a landscape lit with blossoms,
Two sparkling eyes, in their joy that say
Far more than a faltering tongue can speak,
A gentle sigh and a rose-flush'd cheek,
A whispered word fond and tender
The dawn of a love in two youthful bosoms—
A dawn, ay, in all its splendour.

A speechless grief and a parting kiss,
A mound 'neath the quiet daisies,
A vacant place and a form that I miss,
A fair young face that again and again
Will rise in my bosom and flash on my brain
That lives in my joy and sorrow;
That looks on me now as I pen its praises,
And shall, too, God willing, to-morrow.

These, all these—ay, and many more,
Are the ghosts that will haunt me ever—
Are the ghost that come back from the silent shore
Of the past; that will start and peer in my face
In the drearest hour, in the sunniest place,
With a strangeness beyond all telling:
These are the ghosts that will leave me never
This side of Death's narrow dwelling.

M. B.

THE MOTTO OF THE MILL, IN SEVERAL CLACKS.

CLACK THE FIRST.

I do not know when the old mill was seen at its best, in summer or in winter. It had a fine lazy time of it in the summer, and hardly did anything to earn its title to a mill at all, thought the sticklebacks, who had a fine time of it too in the brook on the right hand side, which carried off the "waste" from the millpond. Give us the summer, thought the sticklebacks; summer is the only season of the year worth calling a season at all, for it was invented by Providence, who made the millpond also, for the special use and behoof of us sticklebacks. And the swallows coincided in their opinion.

But the swallows were prejudiced: they never saw the mill in winter, and could not be expected to judge. At the first menace of cold, the luxurious swallows flocked to the eaves of the old mill (which were as floury as ever you'd wish to see eaves: indeed the flour was omnipresent and penetrated everywhere in bed and board), and there they cheeped and twittered for a fortnight or three weeks before flying off to foreign parts. Twenty million loves, I have no doubt, did the swallows cheep and twitter; and I have little hesitation in adding the twenty million loves were addressed to Amy, the miller's daughter. She was worth them all.

But they never waited for the winter—the faithless swallows! Their loves were all summer loves, and they were off by September or October at latest. If they had waited, they would have seen the old mill turn a hard-working mill in the dull season, and would have thought better of it. For in winter only did it set right to work, and clacked and clattered day and night. Then the right-hand brook, that carried off the waste, began to get dry; and the left-hand brook, which

was supplied from the waterwheel, was always full. And the sticklebacks would feel low at such a season; indeed most of the sticklebacks had long previously fallen a prey to the youthful population of the village, who would come out with cups and cans and catch hundreds of them. And this decimation of the sticklebacks was tolerated by the village authorities, and indeed regarded as a sort of judgment on them for their known looseness of principle.

Ah, the mill was busy in the winter, if you like. Day and night, night and day, as long as the water lasted, the old waterwheel splashed and spluttered, and the millstones whizzed and whirled. The clatter they made between them, and between one or two cogwheels and a few hoppers and a dressing-machine (which were all in the conspiracy), made enough to-do to keep the whole neighbourhood from going to sleep, only the mill stood alone, which was fortunate. They always seemed to say something, did the waterwheel and the stones, the cogwheels, hoppers and dressing-machine; and, it was curious, but what they said was always the same. If they were conspirators, what they said must have been a sort of password. Would you know what it was? Get-a-money, get-a-money, get-a-money!—that's what the mill said. Get-a-money, get-a-money!

Sometimes, if the Miller was not attending to his hoppers, and especially of nights when he would be dozing on floury sacks, the mill would run out. Then the mill would get into a violent passion at his neglect, and would gallop viciously along, like an old shrew scolding. And, old shrew-like, its tongue would be in so great a hurry as to become indistinct, and instead of saying Get-a-money in a decent manner, it would splutter Gettamy-gettamy-gettamy-gettamy! as fast as ever it could. Then would the Miller jump up, rub his floury eyes with his floury hands, rush to the mill's assistance, and appease it with more grist. If he had no grist to appease it with, he would push down a handle like that of a senile pump, and shut off the water. And the mill, labouring at its usual song slowly, would quietly remark, Get—a—mon—ey—get—a—mon—a—h—quee-ee-ek—crunch! and so stop.

The neighbours said that the song of the mill was verified in the circumstances of the Miller, who was getting money fast. He had lived in that mill, man and boy, like all his grandfathers back as far as—oh, long before William the Conqueror, said the neighbours. They were not a great authority, however, for very few of them knew much about William the Conqueror except the schoolmaster, who was generally believed to have been "all through him." And the minister: I must not forget the minister: he knew all about the mysterious William of course. Indeed the minister's acquaintance with marvellous occurrences seemed to be infinite; for had he not once told Mother Hubbins down the lane that the stones which built her low garden-wall had once rested at the bottom of the sea? Now he could never have told that out of experience, because Mother Hubbins was older than the minister, and the wall had stood there all her life, she was prepared to swear. So the minister must have got that from his learning; was believed to have read it in the Bible. Most probably in Revelations.

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I am not prepared to say what she was like, for I am in a fuster when I think of her. Whether she was fair or dark, tall or short, hazel or violet, I cannot

precisely say. Stay, though. She was not tall—I know that; she was inclined to be wee and plump; she was certainly ambrosial. Whenever she came near you, you felt a rich warm odour, like—like Amy, in short, and nothing else. It was a compound of hay-ricks, violets, new milk, hedgerows, beans, buns, and beauty. It was the sweetest exhalation that ever floated into the happy dreams of a Rowland or a Rimmel. If I were a Patent Vaporiser, undeterred by the claims of humanity or the laws of my land, I would boil down Amy, carefully preserve the decoction, call it "Bouquet d'Aimée," and make my fortune by its sale. One application would not be all you would require.

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now with the kettle, now with the caddy, now with the warmest and crispest of toast. It was something to have Amy make tea for you. The most sinister Hyson might have blushed itself into the richest Bordeaux with very pleasure, as she poured it out.

Presently the sound of a cart came crunching along the hard snow out of doors. "There's Fred and the waggon," exclaimed the Miller; "take a candle, Amy and run and see."

Amy took a candle, unlatched the door, and opened the wicket which gave on the road. It was a hard frost—a very hard frost not to be melted by her feet standing on the snow—and the horse that drew the waggon looked slightly disgusted at the slippery state of the road. But he brightened up as he saw his mistress; probably with the reflection that if all flesh be grass what a fragrant morsel she would make any odd spring morning; and he stumbled up to the mill-door which stood a few paces below the garden-gate. Out of the waggon then leaped a young miller—a sturdy young miller, too, to skip so lightly on perilous frost; and out, but more slowly, came another miller, sturdy as well, but not so surefooted, for he slipped, in getting out, and came heavily on his back. Upon which the first young miller unceremoniously hauled him up, apparently by the hair of his head. After which the first young miller applied a healthy kick on the region in which the second young miller had suffered in falling. After which, and subsequently to the second young miller's stating, in some wrath, his wish to "blame" the first young miller's eyes, the twain led the horse and cart through a gate into the yard.

Amy returned into the house, "Oh, father," she said, laughingly, "I believe that Tummus is tipsy again."

"Is he?" cried the miller. "Wait till he comes in; that's all."

But that was not all; for in about five minutes the first young miller came in alone, and, taking off his cap, shook a cataract of flour from his hair. He was a good-looking fellow enough, if it had not been for that hair of his, which was a bright red and so long that it was always in his eyes, into which it was carefully combed. The flour, too, which always hung thickly in his locks, by no means improved their hue, but gave them the colour of a consumptive lobster which has turned pale in boiling.

"Now, Fred," said the Miller, "where's the horse?"

"Up in stable, master," answered Fred, with a slight rustic accent.

"And the waggon?"

"Up in shed, master," replied Fred.

"Have you delivered the bran, Fred?" asked the Miller.

"Ay, master, and brought back t'other sacks."

"And where's Tummus?"

The young miller—or rather the Miller's man, for such was Fred—shambled slightly, and, poising himself upon one leg, delivered himself of a supremely idiotic grin. Achieving this to his own perfect satisfaction, he poised himself on the other leg and guffawed.

"Don't stand grinning and cackling there, you stupid fool!" exclaimed the testy Miller, "but speak out. Where's Tummus?"

"In cowhouse," at length replied Fred.

"And what the—the mischief is he doing in the cowhouse?" The Miller was very near an oath, but catching sight of the face of Patience, read therefrom a more than usually Mephibosheth expression, and desisted.

"Speak, idiot! What's he doing?" repeated the Miller.

"He-he-he! he be droonk, sure-ly," the amused Fred replied.

"Oh 'droomk,' is he? I'll 'droomk' him. Bring him in." And Fred slouched out, was absent a few minutes, and returned with his interesting charge.

If the first young Miller was awkward and gawky, the second young miller was emphatically so. True, Fred's hair was long and red, while his colleague's was short and of a natural mud-colour; but the one man had a handsome face, and an ensemble that with care and education might have been polished perhaps into gentility, whereas the other man was essentially and by nature a clodhopper. You could not by any amount of training have made him otherwise than a boor. Being drunk might certainly place him at a disadvantage, but it made him look natural at all events, and perhaps suited him on the whole.

"Now, Tummus, you scoundrel, you come here!" the Miller began.

Tummus, rather loth, made a wild effort to walk up to his superior, and succeeded in propelling himself against Mrs. Patience, and evoking from that good lady a "Drabbet the drunken fellow, cant'ee keep off folks' corns?"

The Miller took a candle, held it in Tummus's face to the imminent risk of his eyelashes, and, shaking him violently by the collar with his other hand, demanded when and where he had come into the state he was in.

Tummus, more in a choked state than any other, was capable of little reply than such as was conveyed in a few gurgles and a steady blackening of the face. Whereupon, on Amy's representation that the man was gradually succumbing to strangulation, the Miller released him, and Tummus quietly subsided on the floor, where he laid with his head in a savoury mixture of cabbage-water and bran, which had been concocted in a bucket for the evening repast of the pigs.

"Oh, you drunken loon!" exclaimed the Miller, shaking his long pipe at the prostrate penitent.

"Oh, you poor lost wordly critter!" added Patience in pious pity.

"Oh, Tummus, Tummus, how can you behave so badly?" Amy put in by way of chorus.

Tummus, touched by the universal hostility towards him into some show of resistance, made a feeble attempt at withstanding it. "And how'd you loike it," returned Tummus, "if you wur allus a scurry-scurry-scurried and a druv about o' cold nights with meal on your loongs and unhappiness eating away your wittles?" Tummus probably meant vitals, but drink and an imperfect education placed him under a grammatical cloud. "You'd praps take to ale then. Ah, I'd wager ee would. Droonkenness, says you: I call it Desperation."

"What does the fool mean?" asked the Miller. Amy knew what he meant; for Tummus had fallen into the universal snare, and was perhaps more hopelessly in love with Amy than was any other creature about the mill.

"Take him out," said the Miller; "dip his head in the pond; dry him with an old dressing-bolter; and then, Fred, come you into tea. We'll have a rasher of bacon, my lass, for we've work befor supper-time that'll keep us hard at it—Fred and me."

And then Amy made tea. It would have done you good to see how she made tea and presided over the board and poured out the hottest liquid that ever scalded mortal throat or brought water into the Miller's eyes. Even Patience seemed to enjoy the tea; but perhaps that was because it was so hot as to remind her of the spiritual destiny of the world, as settled by her and her friends in the rigid meeting-house. For the congregation of Mephibosheth, backed up by a rather big-headed and full-faced divine named the Rev. Slogger, had arranged what was to happen to the universe, and were looking forward with dismal gratification to the apotheosis of Mephibosheth and the skeddaddlement of everybody else. Fred came in to tea, and he enjoyed it too. In fact there was a good deal of quiet comfort in that homely kitchen of the mill, while the snow lay deep without and all inside was only warmth and cheerfulness. I have known more boastful tea-drinkings of winter evenings, and those too in spacious drawing-rooms, where all the cold was not confined to out of doors. I have once or twice seen the snow of Christmas typified on bosoms (in the tastefullest evening dress), whose whiteness was not the only quality wherein they resembled the snow. But Amy's bosom was none of these.

Later on—tea being cleared away and Fred packed off to the mill to warm the dusty spiders on the beams with a couple of deciduous and unprepossessing candles—there came again the noise of wheels on the frost. This time it was no sound of a lumbering cart, but a high-wheeled dogcart, which pulled up in the lane, followed by a sharp rap at the door. Going to answer it, Amy was surprised to see a gentleman, looking as near fifty years old or thereabouts as might be, wrapped warm in a heavy overcoat, who silently passed her, as she stood holding the door, and entered the house. There he raised his hat and addressed the Miller.

"Good evening, friend," said the gentleman. "I am bound for the Hall—Thynnewode Hall, and don't know my way. Can you tell me how far it is?"

He was a handsome old gentleman, tall and hale, rather stern in manner but courteous and of easy

address. Evidently a gentleman accustomed to command and to have his commands promptly executed. The Miller rose.

"The Hall, sir? The Hall will be a matter of five miles from here, and your road is between the brooks below, and off to the left as you come to the coppice up the hill. It's a pretty direct road," the Miller answered.

"Thanks," returned the stranger. "Your daughter?"

"My daughter, Amy, sir."

"Humph. She is a pretty girl," said the old gentleman, shortly.

Amy blushed scarlet. "She is a good girl," answered her father, nettled at the stranger's brusquerie; "and that's more to the purpose."

"To your purpose. Yes, I dare say."

The old gentleman calmly drew a chair to the fire, and sat down. The Miller, somewhat astonished and still chafing slightly, sat down too.

"You don't know who I am, I suppose, my friend," said the old gentleman.

"No I don't," retorted the Miller, sharply.

"I am the new proprietor of the Hall and most of the land about here, and consequently your landlord. I am Sir William Featherstone."

The Miller's face altered. "I beg your pardon, Sir William. I had no idea—if I had only—"

"Quite so, quite so: it is I who should apologise for intruding on a tenant; but my ignorance of the country, into which I only came last night, must be my excuse to you and your daughter."

He bowed to Amy, whose blushes deepened, and who to avoid them hastily left the room. Poor Amy was not much used to a live landlord.

The Miller, not without misgivings whether Baronets were capable of drinking ale, offered his guest some, which Sir William declined. The Miller then thought of bread and cheese, but rejected the idea as incompatible with the peerage. There was a cake, however, which had been the wonder and admiration of the village, as containing more currants than had been seen in those parts before. To the Miller's dismay, Sir William on seeing it declined the cake.

"Dear, dear," thought the Miller, "these gentlefolks are hard to please in the matter of stomachs." And gave it up as an enigma for future study.

The stranger sat a little thoughtfully, and then suddenly broke silence. "You are not alone with your daughter here?" he asked.

"No, sir—at least, Sir William, I have an old woman—a very respectable—"

"Ah: your wife?"

"No, Sir William, not an old woman in the sense of a wife, sir. Though there's old women as are wives, and wives in the sense of missuses, and occasionally the old girl; but I never called *her* so, and she's dead this many a year."

This lucid explanation appeared to bother Sir William, for he stared at the Miller, and then resumed, sharply,

"Who works the mill?"

"Two men. Fred and Tummus," answered the Miller.

Sir William Featherstone relapsed into silence, and warmed himself. In a minute or two he again said, with his habitual abruptness, "Are your men at work now? I hear the machinery, I think."

"Yes, sir; at least Fred is; Tummus being—spiritually took."

"Being what?"

"Drunk, sir," added the Miller, apologetically.

"Begging your pardon for so coarse a word."

"Hah. I should like to see the mill; can you show me over it?" said Sir William.

"See the mill, Sir William? To-night?" repeated the Miller.

"Yes, yes. At least," Sir William added, more civilly, "if it is not troubling you."

The Miller answered it was no trouble, and volunteered to conduct him. Then, remembering the horse outside, he asked his guest if it should be taken out of the dogcart; but Sir William replied no, the beast was provided with a horsecloth. The Miller suggested the man would be cold.

"No, not at all," answered Sir William; "he is deaf and dumb, and can't be cold."

This struck the Miller as a curious circumstance in physiology, but he reserved this question, like the former one, for future analysis. Meanwhile, calling his daughter to bear another light and follow them, he

took one himself and ushered his guest into the clattering mill.

And how the mill clattered! It was a dark, dingy sort of place by night, and the thick cobwebs that hung from the beams overhead were heavy with the white powder which was over everything. You might have thought that the creak and clatter would bring down the mealy spiders; but they held on and grew fat and hearty. Or you might have thought that the mill would be ashamed of its dust and cobweb and dinginess; but the straps and wheels whizzed and whirled as though they were proud of it all. Or you might have thought that Amy was hardly the fit occupant of such a place; but she tripped as airily down the steep ladders from floor to floor as though she was proud of the mill. And the mill was decidedly proud of her. The song of the mill to-night was all on her account. "Get-a-money, get-a-money, get-a-money," said the mill—for Amy. Get it for her to use; get it for her to spend; get it for her little dower. Get it for her to buy happiness, if money will do that; and who doubts it while Mammon is king?

Fred the man was busy collecting a deposit of something that fell down the centre one of three sleeves which hung from the ceiling of the lowest storey. When the deposit was collected in a small bag, Fred the man carried it upstairs to the top storey, mixed it with a quantity of flour there, and let it fall through a complication of straps and sieves down the sleeve again. It was an unsatisfactory labour, reminding one of Sisyphus.

Sir William the landlord regarded Fred the man. Sir William had turned up the fur-collar of his coat and drawn his hat over his brows. There was very little of his face to be seen.

"What is he doing?" asked Sir William of the Miller.

"Carrying up the tail-bag," the Miller replied.

"Has he been long with you?"

"Nigh on three years," said the Miller.

"And he is an industrious workman?"

"He is," replied the miller, "a steady sort of chap, though a bit of a fool. But that, perhaps, comes of grinding. I have noticed grinding has a kind of effect in making a man a fool. May be it's the flour that settles in the hair and weighs on the brain."

"Humph. Let us return."

They went back to the house, Amy last; and Sir William thanked his host, and took leave, receiving directions as to his way. In the lane stood the horse and dogcart tended by the silent groom. Sir William took the reins in his hand, and the horse started swiftly on the hard road, until the sound of his hoofs died away in the night.

Then the Miller and his daughter returned to the house, and talked over their guest. The manor of Thynnewode, heavily mortgaged for some years, had on the death of its owner passed by a foreclosure of the mortgage into the hands of Sir William, who had lately taken the name of Featherstone with the baronetcy, on account of property left him. So much the village folks knew, as also that the new baronet was coming shortly to take possession; but what had been Sir William's former name, or what he had been himself, the gossips knew not. He had evidently come suddenly to the Hall.

They discussed their new landlord's appearance and manner till bedtime, and then the Miller kissed his daughter, and dismissed her, saying that he should not sit up that night as he was wont, for he was tired, and Fred would look to the mill until five o'clock next day. He gave her Good night, and Amy went to bed, her father following her example after his last pipe was smoked. The night was silent over the household and the mill.

The night was silent, broken only by the plashing of the falling water and the whirl of the wheel and the clatter of the machinery. Broken by nothing else? Ay, by something beside.

Not by the murmur of voices in the lowest floor; by the mutter of lovers' words and soft replies? Even by that. For as the night deepened, a noiseless foot had descended from Amy's room, and a muffled graceful form had passed into the mill, tripped down the steep stairs, and made straight for the arms of a floury young miller, who stood waiting to catch it. Surely not the arms of red-haired, gawky Fred?

Into none other, unless it be into those of a tall handsome young fellow with Fred's features truly (which were none of the worst), but with short crisp dark hair instead of the lobster-hued locks, and with

low, impassioned eloquent accents instead of the inharmonious rustic twang. Oh, Amy, Amy! The old Miller, who, in making night hideous with the resonant tones of sleep, never dreams of this. He little recked of the peril of his pet lamb in the embraces of a bo-a-constrictor of a miller's man. The thought of such deceit or guilt has never smote his mealy old heart. Fie, Amy, Amy!

CLACK THE SECOND.

The new landlord at the Hall had considerably astonished the village. He had come down suddenly to take possession, without giving the village time to talk over his coming and receive him: that was a social grievance. He had incontinently shut himself up in his manor-house and closed his park gates without appearing in the village for the behoof of his tenantry: that was an offence. And he had surrounded himself with servants who were perfectly unassailable by enquiry: that was an enormity not to be pardoned. Half of his servants were hopelessly deaf, the other half were incurably dumb; his groom was both, and his cook and butler were foreigners, who spoke no word of English. The village was deeply wounded. Not a word could be got of Sir William's antecedents, not a syllable as to his character. The steward who had formerly looked after the Hall was retained, it is true; but he had only held intercourse with Sir William, and nothing was to be got out of him. The steward had seen some of the servants, but, as he said, conversation with mutes is not to be done unless you have received a deaf and dumb education, which he hadn't, thanks to Providence, nor yet parleywooping, which, at his age, he despised. Actually nothing could be learnt.

Deputations, in the form of milk, eggs, and the beadle, had been dispatched to the Hall, and fruitlessly returned. The parish clerk, who combined parochial matters with a little ironmongery and life-insurance, and was a man of ready resource, had gone to the Hall with a slate in his pocket and a handbook of the deaf-and-dumb alphabet, but he had fared no better. "It may be a way of their talking," said the aggrieved parish clerk, "to flourish fists in a Christian's face and tweak his nose; but give me a plain English answer, and even, although less readiness, no violence." And the village wrathfully coincided in the parish-clerk's opinion.

There were aggrieved spirits in the village who were for resenting the indignity. The butcher half resolved to send no meat until it was ordered in a decent manner; the baker murmured something about declining to heat future ovens; several tenants were of opinion that rents need not legally be paid unless demanded in the language of the realm. The Rev. Slogger was generally believed to be concocting an awakener, which should astonish not only Mephobosheth but the whole parish, and in all probability the deafest and dumbest retainers at the Hall. The Rev. Slogger was fond of improving the occasion whenever circumstances offered; and the occasion to be improved this time was Sir William himself. A perspiring sermon was to be manufactured from the rather personal text, "Who made thee a prince and a judge over us?" If Sir William could answer that, a reply was requested at his earliest convenience: if not, the lord of the manor was to be pronounced a Vessel and launched upon a sea which in the opinion of Mephobosheth was destitute of any satisfactory bottom.

Two people had been sent for out of the village, and visited the Hall daily—Amy and her father. No information was to be got from them, and they were forthwith tabooced. The Rev. Slogger, who suffered from a devouring curiosity in the affairs of others (common, I am afraid, to his denomination at large), had joined with a few pious and insatiable old ladies of his congregation in setting Patience to hunt down Amy on the subject, and extract her knowledge. But Amy persisted she knew nothing of the Hall or Sir William's antecedents: he was a sharp-spoken but polite old gentleman, who had apparently taken a fancy to her father; that was all. And the days passed, and Christmas drew nigh; and the mill went on getting money noisily.

"Amy," said her father one of those days, "I have been thinking, my girl, of your future. If anything should happen to me—"

"Happen, father dear!"

"Why," said the Miller, "unlooked-for things happen to us every day of our lives. Sickness and death will happen, Amy."

She drew a footstool to his feet, and sat nestling to him fondly.

"Now a husband—a good kind husband carefully provided by Amy's father—would look after Amy and be her best protector, wouldn't he?"

She shook her head, laughingly, but with a look of some anxiety for all that.

"Nobody sufficiently cares for Amy to do that, father dear."

"Indeed?" answered the Miller, smiling.

"No father, nobody. And there's nobody whom Amy sufficiently cares for either."

"Nobody, eh? So?"

"At least—I—nobody my dearest father would wish—but—Why what nonsense we are talking!" cried Amy, very hot, hiding her head on her father's knee.

The Miller became very grave. He lifted up her head, smoothed her hair, saying, "Well, well, there's time enough for it perhaps, but do not forget, Amy, that your father is your best adviser in everything which relates to your welfare, and especially in all which concerns little Amy's heart."

With that he dismissed the subject and went and buried himself in floury paths of peace. Did she dismiss it? I rather fear she carried it to that perfidious Miller's man with the chameleon locks, and that there were anxious whisperings and cooings in the orchard of the mill, which would have opened the Miller's eyes to his daughter's dissimulation more effectually than agreeable to the good man, had he witnessed them.

But some eyes witnessed them, and were opened. A pair of heavy stupid eyes, belonging to a lumbering head, and forming a component of the entity known in physiology as Tummus, were at that moment regarding them in a state of fixed and staring stupefaction. Now be it known that the graceful Tummus cherished in his heart (in common with the dissipated cat, the cow, the couple of horses, in fact all the living creatures of the mill) a hopeless attachment to Amy. The sight struck him, and hurt his feelings. For some moments he stared in hopeless bewilderment at the favoured position of his rival. He couldn't make it out, and continued to gape and wonder. At last he took to pulling out handfuls of hair and strewing it about the orchard, which species of phlebotomy appeared to relieve his system. He started up and started off. "Dang un," he cried, "I'll see what measter says to un. I'll clat on un, that I ool!" and set off at a round trot down the orchard.

But he pulled himself up with a thought. "Noa," he ruminated; "noa, I won't. I'll wait and see—and fust time I catch that Fred, I'll poonch un's head." Thereupon the injured Tummus retired to a congenial pigsty and consoled himself by kicking the pigs all round.

That night a tragedy was enacted, while the mill was singing its song in the Miller's watches. The Miller's men shared a bed in a sort of outhouse unattached to the millhouse; where usually in winter time one slept alternately while the other tended the mill. But Tummus had a weakness in the matter of ale, which often drove him to his bed out of his turn; and then would the Miller send his other man to bed while he himself sat up; and so it happened to-night. Tummus the blighted had sought temporary relief in very small beer taken in very large quantities, and had retired blissfully to bed. To him, at the gruff wish of the Miller, entered his colleague Fred, who with a nightcap tied over the chameleon locks, then of the very reddest red, anathematised his sleeping rival, and laid himself tired down beside him.

The first act of the tragedy commenced at midnight. The unconscious Fred was aroused by a violent dig in the ribs, followed by what was evidently intended as a tweaking of the nose. It is unpleasant to a labouring man to be awakened by an inimical hand at one's ribs and one's nose; more especially if one is in love. Fred started up, dismayed.

"Blarm ee!" muttered the voice of his rival in the dark, "I'll give it ee, dang ee; take that—and that—and that!" And Fred *did* take that—being constrained to accept it. "That" was illustrated in the flesh by a muscular demonstration known in select Prize Ring circles as Punishment.

Now when, to quote an ejaculation of a wicked king of Israel, your enemy has found you, the readiest resource is either to fly or "let fly;" and Fred being a man of resource chose the latter alternative. He let fly at his enemy—with pretty good precision, considering it was in the dark—and a sanguinary combat ensued with few words spoken. The mutually hated rivals sat up in bed and punched each other's heads to their respective satisfaction, until the ignoble

blood in Fred's veins showed itself at the nose, and the proverbially green-eyed monster jealousy as represented by Tummus, began to exchange its verdant for a darker tinge. Then, considerably exhausted, both combatants ceased the combat, turned back to back, and lay down.

But blood had been drawn and continued to flow—at the nose. Fred, who at that moment was qualified to fill a small but eloquent part in the first act in "Macbeth," namely where King Duncan receives tidings of the heroic deeds of his generals, continued to bleed on. At last, in very good humour, but without condescending on a word with his rival, he washed his face in the basin, pulled on a portion of his clothes—forgetting however an important article of attire,—and sallied out into the fresh air to cool his heated (and wasted) blood.

Whither he wandered was never known, at least until long afterwards. In due time morning broke on a dismayed household. On the Miller and his daughter wondering where the missing man could be, and on the unfortunate Tummus sitting up in a gory bed, looking on sundry horrible stains on the floor and about the room, intently regarding a nightcap and a mass of red hair in the centre of the apartment, and horror-stricken at the thought of what *could* have passed in the middle of the night, of which he no longer had the remotest consciousness!

CLACK THE THIRD.

Yes, Fred had disappeared; no traces save the awful ones in the bedroom could be ascertained; and the village was in a state of ferment. A murder had never happened in the village before, in the memory of the most senile inhabitant, and the village was determined to enjoy the catastrophe to the utmost. There was no going home for the villagers for long after the discovery they clustered about haunts of gossip like bees around their queen. The taverns did a roaring trade. The one policeman was a marked and a haunted man. All eyes, when not turned to the one policeman, were turned to the Rev. Slogger, and it was confidently rumoured that that worthy divine intended to surpass himself in a few remarks on the text, "Lay hands suddenly on no man," on which the Rev. Slogger intended to throw a new light—in a murderous rather than consecrating sense. The very day of the discovery of the murder the excitement of the village culminated. Towards evening, before steps could be taken to secure the villain Tummus, he, too, had disappeared!

No one in all that turbulent village then was more concerned than the Miller, though his efforts, like those of all the rest, were unable to clear up the mystery. And Amy?—Ah, Amy. I would rather not think of Amy's feelings, if you please. I never could bear to look on the unhappiness of a pretty girl.

It drew on to Christmas Eve: a solemn Christmas Eve for the Miller and his daughter. She never bustled about now—never smiled—never met her father with her old silvery laugh. "I have deceived him," she thought, "and I am punished for my sin. But I have dragged another to my ruin, and he has suffered, too—oh, my love, my love!" She wandered about, the spectre of her former loveliness. The mill heard her low dreary moaning, saw her tears, and answered in its old way. What, to her mind, was the mill's motto now? She thought it had altered its song, and only incessantly repeated a fearful refrain. "Get-a-Murder, get-a-Murder, get-a-Murder," said the mill to poor lost Amy.

It was Christmas eve, and the Miller had come home from Thynnewode Hall, where he had been cloistered with Sir William half the day. He called his daughter to his side, and she came, her eyes swollen and her face pale.

"No news, father?"

"No news of *that*," answered the Miller, "but hopeful news of another kind, my darling. Amy," said her father, "some days ago I spoke to you of a project which was only an uncertainty then, but which, thanks to Providence, has become now well-defined. The project of your marriage, my dear."

"Oh, father—father!"

She had started up with a wild look—a look as of a frightened and desperate animal, turned by the hunters to bay. Then, paler, and with a shudder, she covered her face with her hands, and sank at his feet.

"Amy! what is this?"

"Father," she answered, lowly but distinctly, "I will never marry."

"Why, my dear?" he calmly asked. "I know that this calamity has upset you, as it has us all; but in good time we shall get over that. You are worn out, my child, and I should not have recurred to the subject but for urgent haste. The whims of the rich must be complied with, and it is his whim to have the thing done at once. Amy, Sir William Featherstone has asked me for your hand."

Did she hear him? She made no answer, showed no sign.

"He wishes the marriage to take place as soon as possible; it is his fancy that it should be done by license—very soon. I cannot, in fact I do not care to gainsay him, for Sir William is rich."

Still, never a word.

"I need not tell you, my child, how anxiously I have thought over your future, how often I have pondered over the best means of insuring you a good match. My greatest expectations never reached this. A high position, a position of great social eminence—and a large fortune—will be yours."

Here the Mill took it up. "Get-a-money, get-a-money, get-a-money!" vociferated the Mill.

"In Sir William's means I see the best insurance of your happiness. I have all my life toiled to get something that should leave my daughter not wholly destitute when I am gone; but *such* a prospect—! Why, my daughter will be a lady—a lady with houses, horses, diamonds, lands!"

"Getamoney, getamoney, getamoney, getamoney!" rattled the Mill at a furious rate and without any stops. It penetrated through the closed doors and shook the very rafters.

"She will have such money as her father never dreamt of; she will be a great lady, respected in the county—a rich lady, will Amy. Surely that mill," broke in the Miller, interrupting himself, "is running empty, with the noise it is making. I hope the new man is looking after it."

He rose with the intention of going to see, and raised his daughter's head from where it rested on his knees. It was a poor lifeless head. Amy had fainted.

And Christmas Day passed, and the days of the year were numbered, and people began to forget all the good points of the poor old year and to look forward to the new one as eagerly as though he would come to them one whit the happier or leave them one whit the wiser than all the years that had gone before.

What had passed between Amy and her father since that Christmas Eve I do not know. Perhaps he argued; perhaps he used his fatherly authority; perhaps Amy's heart misgave her that the trouble had come upon her and the missing man as a judgment for having deceived her father in her love. Anyhow she tacitly consented to the Miller's wish, and moved about the house the ghost of her former self. Sir William came to see her rarely; he was a strange lover. It was his whim, as the Miller said, that the marriage should be hastened—in fact that it should take place on New Year's Day; and it was also his whim that no one should know anything about it until the Eve of the New Year. So the father and daughter kept their own counsel, and Amy was spared congratulation or envy; and the village was none the wiser. There were times when Amy's sorrow found vent in words, but none heard them, save perhaps One. There were times (and these more frequent) when the Miller's satisfaction expressed itself more audibly, as he went about the mill. "A rich marriage," said the Miller, in his ruminations, "a marriage that shall bring wealth to my old age; there's comfort in that. Lots of money, lots of money, which shall be judiciously applied in making more." And the answer of the mill was always appropriate. So the days went by.

It was New Year's Eve, and now the village knew and was paralysed, predicting the most dismal results from the hasty union, and overflowing with bitter resentment towards the fortunate Miller. Again, it was New Year's Day—the morning of the marriage; and the village was all a-tiptoe with curiosity and excitement.

The morning broke with happy augury: a clear cold day. The snow lay white on all the fields, and a face pale as the snow looked out upon it from Amy's window. She arose early to arrange her dress, which had been supplied her from the Hall, that the village dress-maker, a most outrageous gossip, should be cheated of her prey—news. When Amy descended, the palest and prettiest bride, she found her father in holiday garb, a thought graver than usual, and Patience, an elderly

bridesmaid under protest, for Patience objected in the abstract to weddings, as tending to make people cheerful and loosen their faith in Mephibosheth. It had been with some difficulty that Patience was persuaded into giving countenance to the proceedings; but eventually they had induced her into a new cap and a dismal face; and there she was, a very vinegar-cruet in holy matrimony. One bridesmaid beside had Amy—a bosom friend among the villagers, who on the strength of an engagement since she was fifteen took a warm interest in matrimonial matters, and was looked upon as an authority in all matters of love-etiquette. To her alone the secret had been confided, and she, nothing loth, had disinterred a property garment which had seen many weddings (for she was in great request), and turned up full of precept and guidance ready to conduct her friend through the dangers of the marriage-service with an experience which was up to all its strong points and situations.

They set out for the church, which they found beset by friends and foes. The whole village seemed to occupy the churchyard; even Mephibosheth was there; and it is believed that the Rev. Slogger himself hovered about in disguise. As Amy appeared, the common antipathy to the proceedings relaxed slightly at sight of her white face. "Ah, poor thing, there she be," observed young Mrs. Hodge to old Miss Podge, "and pale enough she do look, don't she?" "Ah, no wonder," replied old Mrs. Podge to young Mrs. Hodge, "walking blindfold into a den o' lions that nobody knows nought about. It's not given to all of us to see into the hearts of others, but which is no reason to take husbands, my dear, that not a soul knows neither good nor bad about, and more shame to 'em." On which young Mrs. Hodge replied, No, thank goodness, she knew her Hodge a sight of time before he asked her, which was by banns, and according to the prayer-book. And, as old Miss Podge remarked, very proper too.

The parish-clerk had enough to do to manage the boys, who broke out everywhere, like an eruption or a deluge. Several sluices in the form of Sunday School teachers had been placed about the churchyard, but had been swept away, and the flood of boys threatened the very aisles. But by the exertions of the parish-clerk, the beadle, and police force, who was a stern yet mild old gentleman, the danger was ultimately averted by the daring capture of a desperate rioter of six years, and the dragging of him off in a state of tearful catalepsy, into the roundhouse at the bottom of Church Lane. This prompt act on the part of the authorities quelled the disaffected, and produced peace; while the police force was regarded with an awe which affected him deeply.

And now public attention was turned to another topic, and one enquiry passed from mouth to mouth as the time went on. Where was the bridegroom? What had become of Sir William Featherstone?

He was long overdue, and when bridegrooms are overdue, brides are apt to become uneasy. There have been cases when the cup has slipped from the lip at the very last moment, especially in matrimonial matters. It could hardly be said that Amy was anxious: she, poor girl, seemed perfectly passive, and showed no interest in aught going forward; her heart was about to be sacrificed for a fault of her heart, and so that the sacrifice was complete, she cared little how. But the Miller was anxious—grew fidgetty—referred to his watch—walked up and down the vestry in half-concealed perturbation. Where *could* Sir William be?

It was ordinarily the proper thing that the bridegroom precede the bride's party in arriving at the church, said the gossips. A pretty man must the Baronet be not to know how to behave genteelly! He a Baronet indeed! The gossips believed he was no more a lawful baronet than either you or I, mum.

Still, he did not come. Then the minister himself grew discomposed and the clerk began to despair of his fees. The bosom-friend declared to Amy that she had never known such a thing occur in all the course of her experience; and old Patience suffered a wonderful reaction, and brightened up considerably, as she concluded no marriage was to come off after all.

At last, three-quarters of an hour nearly after the appointed time, a carriage was seen at the extremity of the road leading to the Hall, and was received with a shout of excitement. Up it came, the horses galloping furiously and steaming in the frosty air. Up to the church gates, and out got Sir William in radiant apparel, and two young men, who walked to the church portals, amid the reverential bobbing of the day school.

The crowd following, closed behind and entered the church. It was noticeable that Sir William and one only of his friends entered the vestry, the other remaining in the chancel.

"Well, Sir William, at last, sir!" exclaimed the Miller. "Better late than never."

Sir William Featherstone drew him to one side and then and there, to the Miller's utter astonishment, said lowly and sternly in his ear:—

"Worse never than late, Miller. The marriage between your daughter and myself never takes place."

The Miller's was a ghastly face as he looked into Sir William's, and Sir William's was a stern unyielding face as he looked into the Miller's.

"Old man, old man, would you persuade me that this marriage could possibly be blessed?—that your daughter loves me as a woman should love her husband? Do you think I have not seen in your eagerness for this union, in the readiness with which you acceded to my wish for a haste almost indecent, that your desire in it all was not your daughter's happiness, but the wealth your son-in-law would bring? Look at her, where she stands, Miller, and tell me, is that a bride's happy face?"

For an instant the Miller turned his eyes to Amy, and then they sank; and the Baronet went on.

"If I liked to punish your avarice here in the presence of your neighbours by declaring off from all this business, I could do so with impunity. I could never marry your daughter, Miller. Shall I tell you why? She loves some one else than me."

The Miller revived at this, and began a stout denial. "You are mistaken, Sir Wil—"

"Am I?" he replied. "Ask Amy if it is not so. Ask the stolen hours she has passed with him under your own roof, Miller, while you, poor man, were snoring. Ask the fellow himself, whom I could produce with a beck of my finger."

You should have seen the Miller then, and the piteous despair in the look he fixed on his tormentor's countenance. It was almost ludicrous.

"And that man is—" he gasped.

"My son," answered Sir William.

There is no knowing what the aghast Miller would have replied; for at that moment the clergyman, impatient at the delay this whispered conference caused broke in with, "If you are quite ready, Sir William—"

"I am ready, sir," answered the Baronet; "and so is somebody else. Frank," he called to the gentleman who accompanied him, "call him in."

At a whisper or a beck there entered the vestry the young gentleman who had stood in the chancel—a tall and dark young gentleman with crisp black hair. To whom, with a low and sudden cry, Amy flew, and nestled against his breast.

Were not the party in the vestry astonished? I should rather think they were; for the young gentleman, far from being taken aback at Amy's extraordinary proceeding, clasped her and kissed her, and called her his own wee darling, and stroked her silky hair.

"Amy," gasped her father; "is this true? Do you love this man?"

"Oh, father," she answered, sobbing, "I have loved him all along."

"And now," remarked the Baronet, "I think the wedding may take place."

The Miller began a "But who—" and Sir William cut him short. "It cannot matter a pin to you, my good friend, who takes your girl, so long as the money is all right; and I and my son are about equally safe in that particular."

They walked out of the vestry, the Miller completely dazed and passive. You may imagine the mental bewilderment of the congregation when somebody not Sir William knelt at the altar beside the Miller's daughter, and Sir William standing there all the time looking quite pleased. They couldn't understand it at all.

Nor could the Miller understand it apparently. He was so lost, that when the clergyman came to the "Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?" there was a pause, until somebody prodded the Miller, upon which he started forward and almost gave Sir William to be married to the parish clerk. And when it was over, and the party went back to the vestry, the poor Miller looked such a hopeless object, and shook so dreadfully at the signing of the register, that the other young gentleman of the party, who turned out to be Best Man, and who was a young gentleman of great resource, slapped him on the back, saying, "Look here,

old fellow, you're seedy; take a nip;" and actually produced a pocket-flask which he had brought with him in case anybody should get low, and poured the contents down the Miller's throat, to the great scandal of the clergyman.

Well, it was over; and they went out, and two carriages were there at the door, and before getting in Sir William turned to the astonished villagers. "You have witnessed to-day a curious wedding, my friends," said he. "If you feel any curiosity in the matter, come to the Mill this afternoon and share the feast and hear all about it." At that the hearts of the villagers softened, and they gave a tremendous cheer as the carriages drove away.

But when the bridal party entered the Mill-house, lo, a transformation! The old kitchen appeared to be knocked into the parlour, and holly and mistletoe hung about it like a forest, and a perfectly awful spread was laid out in the way of breakfast. It had all been done while the party were at church. Those servants of Sir William might be deaf and dumb, but there was no denying their handiness.

In due time came the breakfast, and then the villagers poured in. There was no room to hold them all. And then Sir William, as he promised, made them a speech.

"My friends," he said, "some years ago, before I owned these lands and the name of Featherstone, I was a hard, cruel man. I had been brought up in a hard school, I had seen much of the worst side of human nature; and I scarcely believed in the good side. I was married, I had a son—a good boy I now know, though I did not know it then. My wife died and I grew harder, colder. I alienated my son's affection, treated him cruelly—so harshly indeed that at last he could bear it no longer and left me—turned sailor—led a strange, wandering life. His absence, and the loss of many friends and several circumstances that I cannot now explain, at length wrought a change in me; I knew I was changed. It was after a severe illness that I woke to better things. I was ordered abroad for my health, and there being alone I thought a good deal on all the wrong I had done, and my heart yearned for my son. I came back to England. Soon after my return this property passed into my hands, and I came down to take possession. I had not been here a day, my friends, when a chance meeting threw me in the way of him I had cruelly driven from me—my poor dear boy!"

Everybody turned to look at him. His eyes were fixed on his father, and his hand stole up to that of the Baronet, who went on.

"Great as you may guess my astonishment was, it was greater to learn he had lived in this village, here in this house for three years, under the guise of a red-headed gawky country boy."

A gasp and a gurgle came from the Miller. The Best Man with his usual presence of mind observing "old boy, a nip will set you all right," administered one medicinally.

"I learnt," continued the Baronet, "that my boy Fred had done this out of love for the girl he has this day wedded; I further learnt that she was a good girl, who was wholly worthy of him. There was a time when I would have scouted the idea of a marriage between my son and the daughter of a country miller, but that time was over. What had I to do with worldliness and hardness more?"

He patted his son on the head and pressed his hand, as a twinkle came into his merry eye.

"But, my friends, some little punishment was due this bad boy for running away from a bad father. I determined to frighten him. I set my people on his track with orders to arrest him—gag him if necessary—and convey him to the Hall. There was a watch placed upon him, and one night he was caught straying, and conveyed straight into confinement. There was a strong room in the Hall, and there he lay ignorant of his crime and fate."

A confused murmur followed. The villagers saw it all now. This then was the Fred who had disappeared!

"Then," continued Sir William, "I visited the mill, and proposed for the Miller's daughter. Not for myself—though she and her father thought it was. For my rascally, dear, good son."

A shout followed this, echoed by another shout from without; and a rush of excited villagers followed, dragging in a sorry spectacle of dirt and mire, in whom everybody recognised the unfortunate Tummus. He had that very day been discovered in the inmost recesses of a villager's pigsty, where he had sought refuge from

the dreadful suspicion against him, and for more than a week had lived with the pigs. He looked uncommonly thin.

"The murderer, Sir William—this be the murderer!" shouted the new comers.

How everybody laughed! Then it was all explained, and the delight of Tummus was mingled with horror at having struck a Baronet's son. But Fred having forgiven him, and Sir William having finished his speech, his son followed next, and then the Best Man proposed the Bridesmaids in laughable terms. But when it was pointed out to him that his chief duty was to kiss the Bridesmaids, and when Patience was submitted to him for that purpose, the heart of the Best Man suddenly failed him. For he was a Swell and believed in moustaches, and was great in the matter of eyebrows; and at the bare idea of kissing Patience he fled wildly from the spot and was seen no more.

After that, the table was cleared away, and the old mill-house shook again to the merriment within its walls. All the village was there; all Mephibosheth was there; even the Rev. Slogger. And a horrible event happened before the night was out, which threatened to shake the very foundations of Christianity. The scream of women, and a strange slobbering sound in the back kitchen, led to the discovery. The Rev. Slogger had got dreadfully drunk!

Before the married couple started, and that was late in the afternoon, Amy sought her father, and sobbed, and prayed him to forgive her for having loved Fred without his consent. And then she asked him one favour.

"The Mill, father," she said, "I have not heard it to-day. Will you let me hear it once more before I leave it for another home?" So Tummus rushed away and turned on the water; and the Mill rattled vigorously on.

"I have often heard it," said Amy, "through many happy hours, and I have thought its voice was a Motto and a song which always said the selfsame thing. Now it has a new meaning. It tells me, father, dear, that though money will bring many good things, it will not bring happiness where love is not; and it will not bring it then, except love be pure. This it has taught me, my dearest, and I hope to bear its lesson to my dying day."

L. H. F. DU TERREAUX.

THE OTHER LODGER.

It was in the year 18—that I took lodgings in the old High Street of Danebrough, being appointed managing clerk to an attorney in that place. I was very particular about my rooms in those days, retaining vivid recollection of the comforts of home—I had been articled to my father—and disliking untidy landladies and disreputable servants. But the most fastidious man would have been charmed with the house in the High Street, with its cozy rooms looking out on to the almost deserted pavement and very queer lamp-posts, as they had looked for years.

The bank was opposite, of that style of architecture in which banks delight—round-topped windows, sham pillars ending in nothing, and the whole surmounted by a row of immense stone teapots, festooned with garlands of flowers. The chaste severity of such an edifice was enough to give respectability and beauty to a whole town, and it made our end of the street quite aristocratic. My rooms were on the first flat, and looked out on the drawing-room windows of the banker, who kept great state therein, as bankers are wont to do in small towns, and spent much money in the adorning thereof. My landlady was a gem, a jewel of the first water, and although I must confess the setting was false hair and ditto teeth, still the jewel was there. Both hair and teeth were so so obtrusively and unblushingly false that I quite forgave her for wearing them. There was not the least attempt at deceit, for the teeth were so loose it was a wonder they did not fall out when she spoke; and the hair was often put on sideways.

But though the setting might not be the best metal, still, as I've said, I had the jewel. Mrs. Alder's cooking was superb—she could make anything eatable. Indeed, when one of her small nieces died, I am sure she might have dished up her young relative, and I should never have known I was eating my own species. Her cleanliness, too, was something unapproachable out of Holland. She polished up the door-handles till I could have seen to shave in them, had not the convexity of the surface made my face like an apple; she scrubbed the floor till

the carpets fairly bristled with the splinters; and she cleaned herself till the skin was always off at the end of her nose, and the false hair out at the roots. She kept one servant—I beg her pardon, "female domestic"—who was large and red, but as she waited on me herself, I know no more about that maiden. Mrs. Alder did all for me, including washing; and how gloriously stiff she made my dress-shirts and collars the admiration of all male Danebrough testified. Buckram was nothing to the shirts. I felt like a man in armour. I am sure they would have stood upright without me easily; and the collars were to match.

I had a moderate amount of work to do, a capital salary, and a little property of my own, and was, in consequence, for a bachelor, rather "in clover." The Danebroughians welcomed me to their feasts with an eagerness that was complimentary to my pocket if not to my good looks; and I had been some two years in the place when the event happened that changed my whole life. Mrs. Alder took "The Other Lodger."

Now, when I first took Mrs. Alder's rooms, it was on the distinct understanding that I was to be the only lodger, and she had, in consequence, refused several offers for the ground floor. But I had relented, and agreed that the vacant rooms should be let, provided the occupant was quiet and respectable. In due course of time the rooms were let, and "the other lodger" arrived. I must mention here, however, that I made an express stipulation that I was to be still attended on solely by Mrs. A., and not have my nervous system injured by the large red domestic.

Now, early on the morning of the day my fellow lodger arrived, a smell, utterly unbearable by mortal nose, came up-stairs: a smell penetrating and noisome; a smell intolerable and diabolical; a smell to be put down and extinguished. I was horrified: the other lodger must be experimenting in chemistry: and, to say nothing of this perpetual smell, my life would not be worth an hour's purchase should any explosive proceedings be carried on in his room, for it was immediately beneath mine. This would never do. I rang indignantly, and sent Mrs. Alder down with my compliments to Mr. Lorn—for the perpetrator of the smell was called Ronald Lorn, at least so said Mrs. A., on the authority of his boxes—and begged that the nuisance aforesaid might be confined to his own rooms. Mrs. Alder went, and returned with the message that Mr. Lorn was very sorry, and would do something else. "Do something else!" what awful intelligence. Of course, it would be in the explosive line, and I was just communicating my fears to Mrs. Alder, when, sure enough, an explosion did come, knocking me into a chair, and Mrs. Alder into my arms, with the false hair hanging at the back of her head, and her teeth all "at sixes and sevens," like a set of nine-pins in the middle of a game. The room, too, was filled with smoke, which came rolling in volumes up-stairs.

After mutually picking each other up, Mrs. Alder and myself proceeded downstairs, and found Mr. Lorn in a state of extreme prostration, lying with his head in his own coal-scuttle, while the room was full of smoke issuing from a small mortar standing with some apparatus and chemicals on the table. We extinguished the mortar, and brought Mr. Lorn round by salts and brandy and water. He soon recovered and thanked me cordially, and I saw he was a good-looking young fellow a few years my junior. As his own room was still unbearable on account of the smoke, I proposed we should go up to mine. He readily assented to this; and we were soon settled comfortably over our pipes and tumblers upstairs. He was very conversational, but would talk nothing but chemistry, and kept pulling little parcels and bottles out of his pocket, and showing me metals and sticks of stuff with unpronounceable names, till I began to think he would blow himself up again in my room, and I should have to send him down stairs in pieces on a shovel. I tried to make him talk about himself, but it was no use. Chemistry only would he converse about, till I began to think he was a monomaniac on the subject. At last his untiring tongue stopped, and we parted for the night.

I went to the office the next day with a head full of the strangest fancies both about chemistry and my new acquaintance. He had given no reason for his chemical pursuits, and, lawyer-like, I was trying to find out *why* he was so enthusiastic about the science, for I never could fancy a science fascinating enough in itself to attract so much devotion. As may be imagined I puzzled my brains to no purpose, and only indulged myself in the wildest theory and speculation. These

thoughts were strangely increased the next day, for that evening my new friend again blew himself into his coal-scuttle, and again I made him welcome upstairs, and gave him the best of my whiskey and tobacco. It was very much in defiance of my usual custom with strangers to trust this young Lorn as I did, but there was something about him that in spite of his interminable chemistry, attracted me to him. I felt curious to know of his home and his family, but by no amount of cross-examination, however dexterous, could I get anything out of him. He invariably glided away into some chemical theory, and I did not like, on so short an acquaintance, to ask point-blank questions.

What he had come to Danebrough for, was also a mystery. He had come unknown to Mrs. Alder, who had taken him on the strength of his good looks and the multitude of his boxes and portmanteaux, and was herself grievously taken in by the experiments. It was, as she remarked, gunpowder-plot every day; and it was only at my request he was allowed to remain in the house.

But I must go on to mention one curious circumstance connected with Ronald Lorn that I did not notice till some days after he first came, when, though short as was our acquaintance, we had become almost intimate. He had had the curtains and carpet taken away out of his sitting-room, and always had his meals in his bedroom, locking his door whenever he went out; so that, except the first two days of the explosions, no one in the household had been into his room. Though as days went on I saw a great deal of him—and indeed he was in my room almost every night, and insisted upon keeping some whiskey there, so that we had a sort of common store of it—though he was always so full of his experiments and chemical doings: yet he never once asked me into his room, or invited me to see any of the wonders he was making—at least according to his own account of them.

Mrs. Alder began to remark on her never being allowed into his room; and I too wondered very much his reason for so jealously guarding it. No one could see in it at the window—for he had the shutters always up and the gas burning. The closed shutters caused an immense sensation in the place; and the small "cads" of Danebrough chalked up remarks derogatory to our characters on the walls of the house, in no way awed by my legal capacity; this, however, was promptly stopped. Weeks went on, and I had got friendly enough with Lorn to know he was at all events a gentleman by birth and education; he said he had some fortune, no near relatives, and was studying chemistry solely for his own amusement; a statement which I must say I received "cum grano salis," owing to his pertinacious devotion to his pursuits.

The unaccountable secrecy observed about his front room raised, I must confess, my curiosity as well as Mrs. Alder's. I knew that chemists were often very jealous of anyone knowing the result of their experiments, and indeed were given absurdly to keeping the least bits of knowledge from the outer world, but Lorn talked so unreservedly of his doings and hopes that I could not believe it to be mere scientific jealousy in his case. His experiments were, according to his own account, of a very varied nature, and he hardly seemed to be aiming at any particular end or to have any special aim in them. Having settled therefore in my own mind that it was not chemistry kept me out of his room, I determined, the first opportunity that offered, to explore the place. It was some days before I had a chance; but one afternoon Lorn went out hurriedly, and dropped the key in the passage—strange negligence for a man usually so careful! Mrs. Alder brought me the key, and begged me to aid her in looking over the room, for she was sure, she said, something was wrong in it; the safety of her house, and indeed her respectability, were at stake.

We unlocked the door, and went together into the laboratory, where the gas was burning brightly. The room was crowded with chemical apparatus of all kinds, while boxes and packages were stowed all round against the walls. Upon the table near the window was a row of curiously-shaped little bottles, and underneath it a number of jars containing parts of different animals, evidently preserved there for purposes of analysis. Some of the small bottles I could make out were labelled with the names of substances I knew to be highly poisonous, and several of the jars below had numbers on them corresponding with the bottles. From all this I learned that Lorn must be experimenting considerably in Toxicology, and wondered he had never spoken of his doing so, for all his conversation

had been in reference to other and far different experiments; of which, strange to say, I found no trace.

Mrs. Alder, tired with staring at all the chemicals which seemed to interest me so much, had gone out of the room, when I turned to examine a curious piece of furniture that must have been brought by Lorn to the house: a small table of walnut-wood, with what looked like a thin upright cupboard or box of the same wood, rising from the side nearest the wall. I was fingering the beautifully stained wood admiringly, and wondering what the cupboard contained, when my hand accidentally touched a spring, and the front of the cupboard flew up, disclosing beneath a picture framed by the sides. It was an oil painting of a young girl, with a profusion of fair hair and wistful blue eyes; a regular Saxon type of beauty; a face no fairer than many I had seen before; yet either the suddenness of its appearance, the circumstances under which I found it, or possibly something in the face itself, struck me with an undefined sense of longing—a sort of bud of love, as it were—though I had then no idea of how curiously and swiftly that irrational admiration would ripen.

I closed the picture, and, fearing Lorn's return, hastened out of the room, and giving Mrs. Alder the key made her restore it to him when he came in. I went upstairs into my own room, and after dinner was sitting by the fire, wondering why the childish face downstairs would keep rising before my eyes, when Lorn came in, and plunged into chemistry and conversation, as was his wont, quite unconscious, as I could see from his manner, that anyone had been into his guarded chamber. For Mrs. Alder on returning the key to him, as she afterwards told me, assured him no one had entered it—an astounding lie, to which I felt myself a party for not contradicting it at once, and confessing the whole affair.

As day after day Lorn and I became better friends, I longed to ask who the mysterious picture was, and the more I thought of the face the more I longed for another look at it; and the longing became so intense that I induced Mrs. Alder, who was entirely devoted to me, to get another key to the door of Lorn's room, and each day when he went out I passed what I confessed to myself was a most absurdly spent hour in standing before the unknown face. I could not have believed in such infatuation in anyone else, but it was nevertheless a fact that I was desperately and seriously in love with this portrait—this child-face—this painting of a girl I had never seen and might never know. Each day this extraordinary passion increased, and transferred me from a staid, hard-working clerk into a most romantic lover. I could think of nothing but the portrait, I was never happy unless gazing on it; and although I could now see it as distinctly when away from it as I could when before it, I was miserable unless Lorn was out, and I was gazing on the features of my unknown love in his room. I can smile now, though it was a serious matter then, at the many attributes I endowed her with, and the mad admiration I paid to my shadowy lady-love. Silver must be the voice that came from such perfect lips, and no evil could rest under so pure and open a brow. What would have merely struck a stranger as a winsome baby-face, was now in my eyes the one face in the world worth looking at, and it was with the greatest difficulty that I refrained from speaking of the subject always uppermost in my mind.

I was very much startled one day when Lorn came up as usual to my rooms, and said—

"Well, old fellow, I'm off to-morrow."

"Are you?" I said, "that's very sudden."

"Yes, it is," he replied. "But the fact is, an old uncle of mine is dying, and I'm going to look after my interests. So I'll say good-bye."

My heart sank as I thought of the portrait; but I was too much surprised to say anything about it, and mechanically repeated "good-bye." Lorn shook hands with me, and walked off.

Next morning I heard, to my intense astonishment, that Lorn had paid his bill in the evening and decamped with all his goods and chattels during the night, leaving the room quite bare and empty, and no traces of his destination. I felt quite lonely without the portrait, and very uneasy as to Lorn's movements, remembering with a shudder his Toxicological experiments, and wondering what his relationship was to the face I loved so much.

Six months passed slowly away, and nothing occurred to clear up the mystery, when one morning I received

a letter in an unknown hand, which turned out to be from Ronald Lorn, and was as follows:—

"DEAR FANE,—Will you come here as soon as possible, to do some legal business for me? I know I have hardly a right to ask it, but if you will grant my request you will everlastingly oblige.—Yours sincerely,

"RONALD LORN."

It was dated from "Raystone House,"—in a county about a hundred miles away from Danebrough; and it would inconvenience me very much to leave my work; but my curiosity prevailed over all other considerations. So after writing Lorn a note, saying I would be with him as soon as possible, I started for Raystone. As I was whirled along through the fine English landscape, with the ever-changing panorama of wood and field, of pleasant village and wide-spreading town before me, I had, strange to say, an indefinable feeling of oppression and anxiety. I endeavoured vainly to shake it off; it still haunted me; and thoughts of my fellow-lodger's experiments in poisons, and of the portrait I had so madly worshipped, chased each other through my brain, having a strange and terrible connection with one another.

At length I reached Raystone, a quiet country village, and found a neat dog-cart awaiting my arrival at the station, to convey me to Lorn's residence, Raystone House. As I drove along, the feeling of sadness and oppression grew more intense, and I felt almost inclined to turn back, and not follow my adventure to what I felt sure would be a terrible issue. But I tried to dismiss my fears as puerile and unworthy of me, and chatted as cheerily as I could with the diminutive groom who had come in charge of the conveyance.

We entered the long drive leading to Raystone House, and met Lorn at the lodge gates, who was very cordial in his welcome of me, and looked as gay and *debonair* as ever. I dismounted from the dog-cart, and we walked together towards the house. It was a fine building, of which the greater part had evidently lately been rebuilt, situated amid pleasant gardens and shrubberies, which Lorn said he had laid out anew himself; and they certainly did credit to his taste in landscape gardening. On reaching the house I was ushered into my room, a pleasant chamber in the west wing, and informed that dinner would be served in a few minutes; pleasant intelligence to a traveller. I lost no time in ridding myself of the traces of my journey and was very soon seated in the handsome dining-room with Lorn, over a well-appointed table. No business was talked during dinner, but when we were seated over our wine and cigars Lorn plunged at once in *medias res* as follows.

"Well, Fane, supposing I tell you about this business I want you to do for me."

"I am quite ready to hear it," said I.

"Then I'll begin now—it's soon told. You must know first that my uncle died, and left this house and considerable property round it, not to me, as I expected, but to his daughter. This rather upset my plans, but I determined to marry her. This, however, was not to be accomplished. She declared she would not marry me, on account of our relationship, and has persisted in her refusal. She says she will leave the property to me at her death, or give me part of it now, but will not admit the idea of our marriage. I am sorry to say the poor girl is now very ill. I have thought it necessary she should make her will; and as I have quarrelled with the attorney in Raystone, I have sent for you in the emergency. She has no relation but myself, and but for this absurd scruple would, I'm sure, have been my wife, for we are much attached to each other. This is all I have to tell you. Some time to-morrow you shall see my poor patient. I am her chief medical attendant, I must mention. You know I am qualified—and we can have the business arranged quickly and satisfactorily."

Very satisfactorily, indeed, I thought to myself; for I had too vivid a recollection of Mr. Lorn's strange experiments to feel at all satisfied as to his proceedings; but there was nothing to be done but wait till I saw the sick maiden, and I shuddered, as I felt certain she would turn out to be the original of my dearly-loved portrait. I passed a wretched night, with miserable forebodings; and when the next day came waited impatiently for Lorn's summons to the sick room. It came at last. I was taken into a quiet part of the house, and in a few minutes stood in the presence of the sufferer. It was the maiden of the portrait, the darling of my dreams! It seemed as if I was meeting an old love, and I could hardly control myself sufficiently to bow quietly in response to Lorn's introduction.

The fair child-face, with the deep tender eyes and hair of gold, looked trustingly up at me as she said, "I'm glad Mr. Fane has come; but you needn't trouble me with business, Ronald; you know my wishes, and I'll agree to whatever you please."

"Oh, yes, Lena," he said; "but I thought you'd like to tell Mr. Fane yourself."

"Some other time," she said, faintly, and sank back on the sofa.

"You want your medicine, Lena," said Lorn; "I'll get it you!"

He moved to a cupboard to do so, and returning, poured some liquid into a wine-glass. With horror and astonishment I recognised one of the small bottles I had so often seen in his room in Danebrough—one of the poison bottles!

His cousin took it quietly, and then sank down again.

"Is the medicine very unpleasant?" I said.

"Oh, no," she said; "but it often seems to make me worse after it. Only Ronald is such a good doctor; I must be wrong about it."

"Of course you are, Lena," said Lorn, hurriedly, and I thought a little confusedly; "it's sure to do you good."

"I hope so," returned she, with a smile. "Now, you had better go, and send nurse in. Ah! here she comes."

We immediately retired. I caught a glimpse of the old woman she called nurse in going out, and a more villainous face I never saw in my life. Lorn stopped her on the landing to give her some instructions; he spoke in a very low tone, but, as I descended the stairs, I heard him say: "Give her the medicine every hour, now."

"Every hour?" said the nurse, I fancied with some hesitation and fear in her tone.

"I said every hour," he returned, imperiously. The old woman went into the sick room, and he followed me downstairs. As we sat after dinner that day I questioned my host very closely as to the disease of his cousin, and asked who had seen her besides himself; he gave such indefinite answers that my suspicions were more than ever aroused, and I determined to satisfy myself by some means or other as to the real condition of the poor girl, and the means he was supposed to be adopting to cure her. The next day I drew up a draft of a will, and, strange to say, Lena appeared a good deal better. I noticed she did not take the medicine so often, and attributed this to my questions of the preceding night—which possibly had warned Lorn that his diabolical plan, if, indeed, such was the state of things, was working a little too fast. I got very intimate with poor Lena, who seemed to like my society, and sat and read with her very often. After my devotion even to her portrait, it may be readily imagined how passionately I worshipped the realisation of my dreams, the original of my shadow-love. It seemed, too, as if she had somehow been conscious of my love for her long before she saw me; for we insensibly glided into a far closer intimacy than I had ever dared to hope from so short an acquaintance. I even fancied Lena was learning to love me, and I believed she was dying by slow poison. At the risk of any opposition on Lorn's part, I determined to have another opinion; he had qualified himself, I believed, as a surgeon, but my suspicions of foul play were very strong.

Fortune favoured me unexpectedly, for Lorn, strange to say, rode away on business to a neighbouring town next day, and I immediately sent off a groom for a medical man, who resided some three miles off. I never mentioned this plan to the old nurse, and her look of horror and surprise when Dr. Murray entered the room was almost comical. He lost no time in examining Lena, but did not seem to come to any very definite conclusion from the symptoms. Just before he went I handed him a small bottle which I had found in Lena's room, and begged him on his return home to analyse it. The doctor was sorely astonished, and at first positively refused to comply with my request. After some persuasion, he consented to do so, and promised to send me a report of his proceedings the next day.

I felt much relieved after I had accomplished this, and wondered what Lorn would say, when he came home, to my decisive measures. I waited anxiously for him till the evening, and was reading quietly in the study, when a servant came in with the information that the old nurse had disappeared, and was not to be found in the house. Miss Lena was calling for her, and what were they to do? I sent another servant to Lena, and instituted a thorough search for the old woman,

but without success. No one in the house knew when or where she had gone, she had not been missed till Lena had called for her, as she occupied a small room next the invalid's. Lena's own account was that she had expressed an intention of going to the town for a short time, and had left her after giving her a large dose of the medicine, all that was left, in fact, after what I had given to Dr. Murray.

I must now hasten on to the sad conclusion of my tale.

Ronald Lorn never came home!

Next day Dr. Murray came to me with the intelligence that the medicine contained a deadly poison, and that if the patient had taken much of it, it would be almost impossible to counteract the effects.

It was just as I expected, and the old woman, Lorn's accomplice, had gone off to give him warning of the danger of returning to face the exposure that would ensue from the doctor's report, and they had both decamped together. I made no effort to trace them, being too much occupied with poor Lena to attend to anything else. The old hag, probably in anger at the destruction of their terrible scheme, had administered so large a dose of the poison just before her departure that Dr. Murray could give me no hopes for my darling. Her constitution had been thoroughly undermined by the poison, he said, and this last dose, would inevitably do its fatal work. It might be some days, or even longer, before death took place, and in the meantime he would do all in his power, but he could give me no hopes.

So there was nothing to be done but to watch my darling die, to see the cruel work going on, and knew that I was perfectly powerless to stop it in any way. Strange to say, after the doctor's visit on the fatal morning, and the disappearance of her nurse, she never asked a single question about her cousin, but seemed instinctively to divine the state of things. So I was spared the pain of explaining his guilt. She got weaker each day; paler and more spiritual grew the innocent face, till the golden hair seemed like the glory crown on a martyr's head in an old picture. I dare not disturb her last hours in this world with my mad love; but that too she seemed to divine, or read in my face, which must have told its tale of love and misery plainly enough. One day, as I was sitting reading to her, she put out a white little hand, and stroked my hair softly, saying, "And you'll miss me, Herbert?" I started at the use of my Christian name, and could hardly keep back my tears as I passionately kissed the poor little hand, and said how miserably I should miss her. It would be taking from me all the sunshine of my life, when that pale child-face was cold in death.

And at last there came a day when I stood in a darkened room, gazing on the outline of the sheet covering the dead, that always thrills one so strangely. Tenderly, as if the dead could feel, I drew down the covering, and looked on the face so white and still, so peaceful and beautiful, the face that, ere I knew my darling, I had loved for so many years. I might go back now with my love to the well-known portrait; it seemed as if I had never known her in life, only known her in the picture, and now, like the beautiful creation of a sculptor.

I stooped down, and reverently kissed the pure cold mouth. For the first time our lips met; but it was the lips of the living clinging to the lips of the dead.

And the rhyme rang in my ears,

Oh, the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west,
Toll slowly.

And I said in underbreath, all our life is mixed with death.
And who knoweth which is best?

HENRY CLARKE.

THE GHOST OF LADY MAY.

When all the heather on the hills that stand round Raycombe Hall were purple Autumn tints, I paid a visit to my friend the Squire. He wrote a kindly letter, bidding me come down and try his covers; so I left the dust and toil of London and went down through hills and dales of merry Westmoreland to where among the beeches stands the Hall. An ancient house that his forefathers built in the good days of great Elizabeth: and many a man who guided the state helm had lived within these hospitable walls, and mused on state-craft and the nation's weal beneath the red-tiled roof of Raycombe Hall.

I gained the ridge that looks upon the house just as the winter's sun was sinking fast, and slowly died the

short December day; the groves of fir that hung on the hill side looked sombre in the fading night, and all the ripples of the lake were cold and still. The little star that timorously peeped out in the blue heaven was striving, but in vain, to see its own reflection in the mere. I rode into the village past the church with lichen walls and ivy-mantled tombs, round which the ancient lords of Raycombe Hall slept peacefully near the little lake whose ripples they had loved so well on earth: and many a thought of these old knightly days passed through my brain as I rode by the place. How many stalwart men lay there whose swords had rung upon the unbelievers' helms in the red fields of sunny Palestine! How many gallant knights, who oft had cried "St. George for merry England," now lay there, as silent as the daisies on their graves!

The shooting at Raycombe was very good, and I found myself in very comfortable quarters. My host the Squire had some very pretty daughters, who did all in their power to make the time pass pleasantly.

The Christmas-time drew near, and Raycombe was to be filled with guests. The Squire kept up the ancient hospitality of his forefathers, and had invited an immense number of his friends and relations. Two days before Christmas the old house was quite full, and a grand ball was given, to which many people not staying in the house were invited.

It was a capital dance, and went off as brilliantly as a Christmas party could possibly do; but my peace of mind was sorely disturbed in the middle of it by a piece of intelligence that was communicated in the following manner. I was dancing a quadrille with pretty Annie Lester, my host's daughter, when, as we were waiting our turn in the dance, she said to me, very mysteriously, "Do you believe in ghosts, Mr. Allen?"

I started, for I may as well say at once that I do believe in ghosts very firmly; and I replied—"What made you think of that?"

"Never mind; tell me whether you believe in them or not?"

"Well, then, to tell you the truth, Miss Lester, I do!"

"Ah, indeed!" said she, quietly, "that's fortunate, for then you won't be frightened if you see it!"

This was all very well, but I was certainly considerably frightened at the bare idea! I said, however, as composedly as I could, "May I ask what I shall see, Miss Lester?"

"Oh yes, but some other time. I think it's our turn," and the dance proceeded.

My partner would tell me no more then, only adding, maliciously, for she must have seen I looked scared at the idea,

"We've a family ghost, Mr. Allen, and it's in your room!"

The dance ended, and she was very soon carried off by another partner, leaving me considerably mystified and frightened.

The intelligence quite upset me for the rest of the evening. I did not like to ask any questions on the subject, but puzzled myself with endless conjectures. The only consoling thought was, that if the ghost did frequent my room it ought to have appeared before; although I sadly reflected that there were some spectres who preferred certain fixed times for their visits, and declined general invitations.

The walk up to bed—I had rooms in a distant part of the house—was a treat that night, or rather morning. How I crept swiftly by dark corners in the old house, and slid past half-opened doors, and at length gained safely the protection of my bedroom, which looked more sombre and ghastly than it had ever looked before in the fire-light.

I stood with my back to the fire, and tried to feel comfortable, but with indifferent success. The room was a large one with two bow windows looking different ways. In the corner between them stood a cabinet of dark wood, extending from the ceiling, and large enough, as I had reflected on my first arrival, to be a very comfortable residence for a ghost of moderate income and no very expensive habits.

Before getting into bed I went to the window, and, opening the shutters, found it was a brilliant moonlight night. This gave me some consolation. A dark, murky night would have added terrors to the situation. I welcomed the moon as a friend, and, partially opening the shutters, let it stream into the room.

After careful investigation of every part of the room, looking the door, looking under the bed, and making a vain attempt to open a large cabinet I spoke of, I

went to bed—I must say with my nerves not in very first-rate order to receive any ghostly visitor, but still comparatively tranquil.

The sun was shining in place of the moonlight when I awoke. My dreams had been of the waltzes of the night before: my only visitors the fair forms of Annie and her sister. I dismissed the ghost as an idle fancy, and felt very much relieved. As the reader will hear, my satisfaction lasted only for one day. For the next night brought with it similar fears, and, a terrible confirmation of them. I was haunted at intervals, even when out on the ice, with strange feelings and fancies about my room. I kept wondering, in spite of my determination to dismiss the subject from my mind, what form the spectre would take if it did come, and whether the strange dark cabinet had anything to do with any supernatural visitors.

The next night came, and I went to bed with a little better courage than on the preceding one. I tried to feel as bold as possible. My room looked just the same: the red firelight flickered on the dark furniture, and the silver moonlight which flooded all the garden peeped in through the half-opened shutters. The fire hissed and crackled merrily, and was invaluable. It kept up my spirits immensely. A fire is at all times almost like a companion to a lonely man; to a nervous person it is still more. Sitting by the firelight alone, I have often found it quite take away the lonely feeling; its forked flames and bursts of sudden splendour seem to flash out in answer to one's thoughts, and visions of the past and omens of the future may be found in the fantastic caves and corners in the living coals.

I mused for a long time by the firelight, till it began to wane, and my thoughts began again to have a ghostly tendency. I did not like that, so very soon deserted my station by the hearth, and went to bed.

I had not been asleep more than an hour, or rather less, when I distinctly heard some one coming up the long wooden staircase—a slow and a heavy step, which I did not recognise as belonging to anyone in the house. I sat up in bed, and listened attentively. It came nearer and nearer, and finally stopped just at my door. I called out, "Who's there?" and, receiving no answer, was astonished and alarmed to see the door open, remain so for a few seconds, and then as slowly close again. If I had not been looking at it intently I could have sworn some one had entered the room. For I heard distinctly the footfall on the floor, and it seemed to go to the fireplace and then stop there. A few minutes afterwards I heard another sudden movement, this time towards the doors of the old cabinet. They, too, slowly opened, and, like the door, again slowly closed. I caught a glimpse of the inside, and saw there was nothing in it at all—not even shelves, as I had expected.

I plucked up courage, and, getting out of bed, went to the door and to the cabinet. Both were as firmly closed as when I had gone to bed.

I was undoubtedly alarmed, but tried to console myself with the thought that perhaps this would be all, and I did not care as long as I did not see anything. I knew if I could repress my curiosity, could keep under my will, and not wish to see the spirits, they would remain invisible.

I was just dozing off again, when I heard another step along the passage; it was quite of a different character to the former one, for it was hasty and light. The door slowly opened again, and closed as noiselessly as before: the footsteps had entered the room. For some time there was a busy hurrying to and fro, and feet seemed to patter about all over the room. A short pause ensued, and then I saw the position of a chair hastily changed towards the fire.

I could bear the repression of my curiosity no longer; I could not help willing with all the intensity in my power, that whatever there was in the room should be at once visible to me. I had no sooner done so, than looking again towards the fire, I saw a figure sitting before it, apparently leaning over it as a woman's figure; a fair slight girl with a profusion of pale gold hair streaming over her shoulders. As I watched with breathless intensity, she rose, and walked towards the window, so that I could see her plainly. She was very beautiful, with clear-cut, high-bred features, a very winning face, and with a stately step she walked towards the window and threw the shutters open. The moonlight streamed in upon her, and surrounded her with a flood of light. She held something in her hand, which seemed to be a letter or scroll of paper, which she ever and anon kissed passionately.

As I gazed upon her, fascinated by her wondrous beauty, for all fear seemed to have vanished, I saw the folding doors of the black cabinet open, and then, with horror, I remembered there must be another spectre concealed within; the first footsteps had gone towards it and entered.

My surmise was right! As she stood near the window, a tall figure, wearing the dress of a Puritan soldier, with closely-cropped hair and beard, strode out into the moonlight and approached the beautiful phantom. He seemed pale as death, and his brow wore a formidable scowl, as he advanced to the maiden with what seemed a threatening gesture.

The lovely maiden and the stern warrior seemed, as they swayed to and fro in the moonlight, to be disputing some object, apparently the letter she held in her hand. Suddenly something flashed in the air, and I saw the stern-faced man had drawn his sword; he held the little hand in his own, and, to my inexpressible horror, with the cruel stroke he severed it from the arm. The phantom of the maiden seemed to quiver with pain, and then sink down upon her knees. I could see the fair little hand lying bleeding on the floor, so white and beautiful that it might itself have appealed against the ruthless stroke, even had its owner been less lovely.

The taller figure then strode hastily to the door, which opened as when it entered, and it passed from my sight. Then the moonlight seemed to die away, and I sank back exhausted with terror and worn out by the terrible sight I had witnessed. When I next looked up the spectre had vanished, and the morning sunlight was streaming into the room; I involuntarily turned to the floor, half expecting to see traces of the awful deed, but then there were none to be seen. The shutters indeed were open as I had seen them during the vision, but the room door and the cabinet were fast locked.

I hastened away from Raycombe on the day following this fearful night, and was ill for some months afterwards. I did not think it necessary to mention my adventure to any of the family, although I observed Annie Lester look inquiringly at me when I entered the breakfast-room next morning. I had suffered too much, however, to mention the subject; and her curiosity, if it existed, remained ungratified.

Many years after, I heard the following tale of the old Manor-house, and the room I so well remembered:—In the time of the Great Rebellion, the Manor-house of Raycombe had been taken from the good knight, Edmund Lester, on account of his devotion to the King, and given to Praise-the-Lord Barebones, a captain in one of the regiments of Cromwell, a brutal soldier, and no fit husband for the gentle Lady May, who had been forced by her father to marry him. Yet a good and faithful wife she made him, and like the Lady of Burleigh—

"Shaped her heart with woman's meekness

"To all duties of her rank."

She had been betrothed in youth to a young cavalier, who had fallen, fighting for his king, on the field of Marston; young as she then was, she had learned to love him, and even when married, she would often read with tears his last letter, written before the battle in which he fell, which his servant had delivered after his young master's death. Her husband was greatly enraged at her sorrow for the young soldier's fate, and, having secreted himself in the old cabinet, saw her one night, on Christmas Eve, reading the letter I have mentioned. He stepped out, and in a fit of rage, cut off her hand at one blow. Lady May died from the wound, and her wretched husband, after living some days after in a state approaching madness, killed himself, and was found dead in front of the Hall, with his wife's cold hand clasped in his own.

I have nothing more to add to my story, nothing to offer in explanation of the fearful night I passed at Raycombe Hall. I was in perfect health at the time, and am convinced it was no phantasm of my own brain, no spectre of my own raising. I am by no means an imaginative person, and certainly could never have invented such a succession of horrible incidents. I may say in conclusion, that I shall be very glad to give any disbelievers of my story an introduction to the Squire of Raycombe, on the condition that they pass Christmas Eve in the haunted chamber, and, like Sir Bedivere, watch what they see, and "lightly bring me word."

POLLY'S BANDBOX.

OPERETTA CHARADE IN ONE SCENE.

CHARACTERS.

FLORIO (of the Fire Brigade).
 Mr. ROBERT BOWIE LEGGE (known as Bandy Bob,
 of the "Citizen" line)
 CELESTINE (a Milliner).
 POLLY P—(erstwhile of Paddington, W.)
 OVERTURE. "Polly Perkins."

SCENE.—The apartment of CELESTINE and POLLY, semp-
 stresses. Doors L. and R. A table at back of stage;
 a clothes-basket in one corner; a gun in another.

Enter POLLY, R.

POLLY. Christmas-day come at last, and quite time,
 too, I say. I am sure that highly appreciated season
 might come three or four times a year instead of once,
 as the saying goes, from the way it is looked forward to
 and back upon, and the fuss made about it. And yet
 I don't know: if it came oftener it wouldn't be thought
 so much of, would it? Like new clothes, or a holiday,
 or a nice murder now: the seldomer they come the
 more people enjoy them. And talking of new clothes
 reminds me of my loss. My poor dress! was anything
 half so provoking? Just as I was bringing it home for
 to-day, intending to put it on and wearing it into the
 park, to go and lose it—I can't think where, but I fancy
 in the omnibus. It must have been fate, but who ever
 heard of Fate riding inside an omnibus?

Enter CELESTINE, R.

CEL. Polly, my dear—

POLLY. Ah, Mary Ann—

CEL. I beg, dear, you will omit a common and to me
 obnoxious epithet. I am not Mary Ann: I wish to
 forget I ever was. If your godfathers and godmothers,
 Polly, which did promise and vow (in quite an un-
 called-for manner), had held certain views as to names
 which were opposed to your own, there is no need why
 you should suffer for it, I hope?

POLLY. Certainly not.

CEL. Very well, Polly. My godfathers and god-
 mothers, being of inferior extraction, were not supposed
 to know better. They called me Mary Ann: I call
 myself Celestine. I prefer it. In "Amanda the Aban-
 doned," which I take out in penny numbers, illustrated
 beautiful, there is a young lady with back hair all down

to her feet, named Celestine, who being pursued by an
 unlawful Baronet, takes to a bathing machine and sets
 it afire.

POLLY. Lor!

CEL. Yes; and she lets down her back hair—down
 to her feet you know—and calls to the unlawful Baronet
 through the little hole at the back of the machine, "No,
 Sir Mortimer," she cries, "never, Sir Mortimer; for,"
 says she, "the child of the ocean prefers death to dis-
 honour!"

POLLY. And very proper too. But does she die?

CEL. Well, she's continued in our next, so I don't
 know. I'll tell you on Saturday. But ever since read-
 ing that I've called myself Celestine, and should like to
 be known as such among friends and acquaintances, if
 you please.

POLLY. I'll remember, Mar—Celestine, dear. Ah, but
 you were never chased by unlawful Baronets, were you?

CEL. Never, dear. We have sworn to live for each
 other only, and never get married.

POLLY. No, never get married.

CEL. (sighing). Yet we have had our little romance,
 Polly, and lived through it.

POLLY. (sighing). Yes, we have lived through it.

CEL. You, for instance, have lived through it.

POLLY. Ah! all his own fault, for he never told his
 love, but let concealment, like an early bird, pay for
 his damask sheets. How well I remember his fresh,
 manly face. [Speaks through music: air obvious.] When
 the first flush of sunrise brought the rattle of his cans
 and the cry of his nourishing wares, I would appear with
 a smile on my countenance and a laugh in my eye,
 which he would compare to the ebony hue of the seed-
 lings of a household fruit. I thought he was joking.

CEL. And he never spoke.

POLLY. Yes, I am wrong; he spoke once. But I
 was scornful [music], and replied that my wooer must
 have qualifications in the way of hair and whiskers,
 which he, alas! never possessed.

CEL. And drove him from you?

POLLY. Yes, and drove him from me. The burden
 of his desolation as he left me broke from him in song.
 He confessed to the inhabitants of the district that
 [music] I was beautiful as the fluttering insect of our
 bowers, and proud as the heir of the Plantagenets
 wielding the sceptre of our realm.

CEL. Poor, poor, Polly!

POLLY. And you, dear—you have had your sorrow too.

CEL. Ah, yes. Like you, I have lost happiness.
 My lover was brave, gallant, true; [speaks through
 music] he used frequently to visit my parent's home,
 and always returned thence in a state of agitation.

POLLY (with emotion). Oh, why, why?

CEL. I never could learn. I believe from feelings
 over which he had no control. He subsequently left
 for the antipodes.

POLLY. On any grounds?

CEL. Chiefly owing to his agitated system. On
 returning, rich, constant, and hopeful, my father, I
 grieve to say, deceived him. [Music]. He informed
 him I was another's—that the rival who had won me
 lived in South Belgravia, that he earned a precarious
 livelihood by the rectification of diseased pianos, and
 that his hateful name was Jones.

POLLY. Merciful pity!

CEL. What needs it to say 'twas false—that it broke
 my lover's heart—that he sank under the blow—and
 that his last words conveyed in a message to me were—

POLLY. What?

CEL. "Oh, my!"

POLLY. Is it possible?

CEL. Since that time I have vowed to remain single,
 and live for my darling Polly.

POLLY. And I for my Celestine.

CEL. We will never part.

POLLY. Never—never!

CEL. (aside). How little she guesses that my affec-
 tions are set on Florio, my hero of the flame!

POLLY. (aside). How could I break to her that I have
 already seen a face on the doorstep of an omnibus,
 which is graven on my heart.

CEL. And this is Christmas Day, dear, come round
 once more.

POLLY. Yes, Celestine, are you not glad? We have
 the day to devote to one another.

CEL. Oh yes—yes! (aside). I have promised to de-
 vote it to Florio, who is to call here. I wish she would
 go out.

POLLY. I love Christmas, Celestine.

CEL. And I, Polly.

POLLY. The theatres!

CEL. The eating and drinking!

POLLY. The peace!

CEL. The plenty!

POLLY. The pantomime!

CEL. The pudding!

DUET—CHRISTMAS.

CELESTINE.

VOICE. *Moderato.* I love the chime of Christ-mas time, When past and done the year-ly

PIANO. *Sym.*

work is; When mor-tal eyes are turn'd to pies, And mor-tal spirits sigh for tur-keys; When all the walls are green and red, . . . With

Pomposo.

i - vy, hol - ly, fir, and ber - - ry; And af-ter the tre-mendous spread The mind re-verts to port and sher-ry.

DUET.—(Allegro.)

1ST VOICE.

Oh fun of all va-ri-e-ty, With ri-o-ty so-ci-e-ty, .. Eat-ing to sa-ti-e-ty, With mer-ri-ment and glee: The

2ND VOICE.

Oh fun of all va-ri-e-ty, With ri-o-ty so-ci-e-ty, .. Eat-ing to sa-ti-e-ty, With mer-ri-ment and glee: The

PIANO.

Allegro Moderato.

Fine.

din-ners of such qua-li-ty, You feel you couldn't swal-low tea. The hol-ly tree, the jol-li-ty, Oh Christmas time for me.

din-ners of such qua-li-ty, You feel you couldn't swal-low tea. The hol-ly tree, the jol-li-ty, Oh Christmas time for me.

Fine.

POLLY.—(Moderato.)

I love the time of Pan-tomime, when all the fun in tricks and knocks is, When sorrows flit from out the pit, and never sit in up-per boxes; The

Da Capo Duet.

Har-le-quin with flying feet, .. the merry Clown, per-fidious jo-ker, The sleep of in-no-cence replete, With visions of a red-hot po-ker.

OSL. And now, Polly, I must pop on my bonnet and shawl and run to the baker's to see if the dinner's done. Keep house while I am away, and if anybody should come—(aside) Suppose Florio should come? He was to call, and arrange about taking me to-morrow to the pantomime. He often arrives an hour before he is expected, owing to his ardour and the busses! (aloud) If anybody should come, it—it'll be the landlord, dear, or the landlord's son, perhaps, to ask about the rent: you must put him off with promises, though he is a nuisance, and violence would only serve him right. You understand?

POLLY. Oh yes, dear, I understand. [Exit CELESTINE, &c.] But, Celestine! how it—She's gone. It's very funny that the landlord should call to-day. Or his son. Especially his son. I shall go and ask Celestine what she means. I don't see it somehow.

[Exit &c. Enter L. Bob, cautiously. He is dressed in the best garments of a 'bus conductor; his hair is close and carefully brushed into the corners of his eyes, and he has parenthetical legs.]

Bob. (first impelling a head, then a pair of shoulders, and lastly his body into the room.) An ouse. An umble ouse. And nobody in it! That's suspicious. Perhaps it's a trap! [Disappears, then pokes his head again through the door.] After all wot is there to fear? Nothing to a man like me. [Enters the room.] As I suspected, the ouse is umble. But there's a charm about it—the pe-culiar charm of indigence, which is inseparable from—from ouses like it. A tabule! A poor but perfectly honest tabule. And nothink on it! That's suspicious. [Recoils from it, but relents.] After all wot is there to fear? Nothink to a man like me. Besides, there's an air of independence about that tabule which is associated in my mind with—with tabules generally. [Sits on the table &c.] You see I am nat-erally suspicious—as a man and a conductor. I admit it. I was trained up when a child to the suspicious way I should go, and now as I'm hold I come the deep-artful from it. When a very little boy my father and me was riding on the top of a bus to the bank, and my

father says suddenly to me, "Bob," says he, "you remain there in the station for which you was fitted, until I come back," says he; and he gets down just by Thavies Inn, and he dives, and I never see him again. So I took to that bus and grewed with it, and here I am, cautious in consequence. You can't come over me. Parties try it; giving half franc pieces for sixpennies on dark nights, and getting down at the Circus in an urry pretending to see friends round the corner: I'd friend 'em: and old ladies what are always losing shillings in the straw, as can't be found, and then wanting restitution. Ah, old ladies is desperate deceitful, always a ailing o' the wrong bus and driving to the wrong place and then a pitching into the conductor. And then their umbrellas is always so unproportionate to their size, and so sticks on rainy days to that event as gives cold to old gents with sensitive legs; which is rheumatism to the old gents and swearing to the conductor. But I'm down on 'em generally; I'm down on most things; I'm not to be done.

THE TUPPENNY BUS.

Bob.

VOICE.

Moderato quasi parlante.

1. A Con - duc - tor I am of a

PIANO.

Tup-pen-ny Om-ni-bus. Rat-tle and jog a-way o-ver the stones; A Con-duc-tor whose con-duct thro' life is ex-em-pla-ry,

Smart and in-tel-li-gent ev'-ry one owns. You'll find room in-side if the buss is not o-ver full, Mod'rate the charge is what-

-ev-er your rank, And the com-pa-ny's route's from the Bank un-to Pad-ding-ton; Al-so from Pad-ding-ton un-to the Bank.

ff All right, whip a-way, trip a-way, hi, stop, whis-tle, wo-ho! Just room for one, miss, and slam to the door a-gain.

All full in-side, Bill, and off we can go!

2. It's pleasant to sit in the bus of the Citizen—

Rumble and jumble o'er street and through square.

There's little complaint between me and my passengers:

Civil I am if you pay me my fare.

And no fault I find, though some gents, if you civilly

Ask where they started from, tell shocking fibs:

And elderly ladies, who want to stop suddenly,

Deal very hard with a fellow's poor ribs.

Bank, Bank!

Whip away, trip away—

Hi-hi!

Bill, here's a fuss.

"I told you, conductor, to pull up at Westminster!"

"Well, mum, you've not took a Westminster bus."

Only last night a young ooman left a bandbox on the top o' the bus, she being inside. Out she gits, pays her tuppence and goes away. What do I do? I see her go into an ouse: this is the ouse: I take her box ome; I bring it along this morning, for her to prove her alibi. But, mind you, I don't show her the box; no; cause why? Of course she'd swear it was hern, if I did, and I'd be done! not having observed her face, and not being able to prove my alibi. So I leave the box outside on the landing, and here I am. Constantly persewering in the de-termination not to be done.

[Enter Celestine in a bonnet and shawl, n.]

CEL. A man!

BOB. A young ooman. I wonder now if that's my young ooman? Good morning, miss.

CEL. Good morning, sir. What is your business?

BOB. Ah, that's it, you see; which is for you to tell me, and not me tell you. It's for you to prove the co-rect alibi between the circumstance which occurred last night and the event which is a coming off.

CEL. (aside). Last night? Coming off? He must mean Florio, for I saw him last night, and we were talking about going to the theatre to-morrow.

BOB. (winking mysteriously). Box!

CEL. What?

BOB. Box!

CEL. (aside). He does mean Florio; he evidently comes from him—perhaps with a message. (aloud). Yes, sir, you are quite correct in your hint.

BOB. Oh, am I? That's the result of caution. The hint was private.—Box!

CEL. No, not a private box; only in the upper circle.

BOB. (aside). She says she belongs to the upper

circle. Now that's gammon; and she's trying it on. (aloud). I don't wish to contradict you, miss; but upper circles don't ride in busses.

CEL. Oh, no; I dare say we shall take a cab.

BOB. (offended). Oh, do you? Oh, you're making personal allusions, are you? Oh, busses ain't good enough for you, ain't they? Oh, very well. And how about the Box?

CEL. You mean the upper boxes?

BOB. Well, I don't know about boxes, but I mean a upper Box, if by "upper" you mean on the roof.

CEL. Roof? What do you mean? Speak out if you have anything to communicate.

BOB. Ah, I dessay. Tell you all, I suppose? I'm not so green. You prove your alibi to the Box first.

CEL. My what?

BOB. (aside). She don't know what her alibi is! What illiteral parties women are! (aloud). Now what'll be inside o' the Box, for instance?

CEL. Why, myself, of course.

BOB. WHAT? You—you in that Box!

CEL. Yes, and the other person.

BOB. Another person! Well, of all the gammoning—another person, eh?

CEL. Certainly; I never go without him.

BOB. Without him? Oh it's an Im is it?

CEL. What I should do if I were to lose him I don't know, or if we were separated. Why the poor body would go to ruin but for me.

BOB. The poor what? (aside). Good gracious, it's a body, and I never looked into the box! This is horrible!

POLLY. (outside). Celestine!

CEL. Oh, dear me, there's Polly—what if she were

to find a man here, especially a man with a message to me! Here—Mr. What's your name,—quick—get into somewhere—(Running about the room: sees clothes basket). Hide here—only for an instant—and all shall be explained.

BOB. Oh that's all very well, but—

CEL. Pray—pray—pray do! My peace depends upon it, and the peace of another.

BOB. Ah, several pieces I suppose. She's been a cutting of the body up. Well, I'll get in—just to oblige a criminal; but mind you, the moment I'm out o' this den of horrors, I go straight to Bow-street.

CEL. Oh anywhere, anywhere you like; only get in now.

[Goes off n.]

BOB. (in the basket). There's a awful odour in this basket, which may partly proceed from the wash and partly from gore. I wonder how many assassinations that per-werted young woman has committed, now? I wonder who the victim in the box is? He can't be a very big 'un; but then he's in pieces. Perhaps she's cut off his legs. They often cut off their victim's legs when their minds are distorted with crime; and the violence of their passions sometimes similarly disposes of the arms and the vertebrae.

[Pops down.]

[Enter POLLY n., with bonnet and shawl.]

POLLY. I can't make Celestine out; all at once she refused to go for the dinner, saying she has a headache and begging me to go. If I had only my new things home now—but I hate going out on Christmas Day such a figure as I am. But it can't be helped, so I suppose I must go. Ah, if I were only a rich lady, I'd do what I liked!

THE LITTLE MILLINER'S SONG.

VOICE. *Fine.*

1. Hem and ga - ther, tuck and bind, Ev-er-lasting-ly, ev-er-last-ing-ly,

PIANO. *Fine.*

Is not work to which my mind Is in the least in-clined? Thus to spend the wea - ry hours, Fitting o - thers for gay show, Shall the drudging

rall - - - to. *Da Capo.*

aye . be ours? No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no! Hem and ga - ther, tuck and bind! No, no, no, I'm not in-clined!

rall - - - to. *Da Capo.*

2ND VERSE.—Needles, scissors, thimbles, thread,
Everlastingly, everlastingly.
Well! they get me daily bread
Until the time I wed!
Speed, oh! speed, ye weary hours,
Care and sorrow with you go,
Sadness never always low'rs,
No, no, no, no, no!
Needles, scissors, thimble, thread,
No, no, no! I'm not inclined.

[Exit POLLY, L.]

Bob. (emerging). There's another of 'em—perhaps an accomplice of t'other. Oh, this is an horrible ouse; and the dampness arising from the things for the wash will shortly add another to the numerous huray of wistims. [Pops down.]

[Enter FLORIO L. He is in full costume of the Fire Brigade, and carries a bandbox.]

FLORIO. Coming up the stairs I pick up this box. The landlady says it's not hers, but was left by a person for one of the young ladies. On the stairs I meet a young lady—probably Celestine's friend; and so I pretend I'm going higher up. I wonder where Celestine is? [Places the box on the table.]

Bob. (aside). Good gracious, a party with the body! I wonder whether he's a volunteer, or whether he belongs to the mounted police?

[Enter CELESTINE R.]

CEL. What, Florio!

FLOR. My Celestine!

CEL. How glad I am you came! You musn't stay long, though, because Polly will be back directly, and I dare not—could not—divulge all to her just yet.

Bob. (aside). T'other young woman don't know about the body, it appears. She'll turn Queen's Evidence at the trial.

CEL. And Florio—

FLOR. Otherwise William; but Florio to oblige you.

CEL. Yes, to oblige me, Florio. William was good enough to know at first, but not to love. I could not call my lover William, so I determined to put an end to William altogether.

Bob. (aside). I wonder if William's another victim, or if he's the dissected party in the box?

CEL. So you are Florio, mind; for you know all about "Amanda the Abandoned," and how Celestine shot the unlawful Baronet.

Bob. (aside). This is the atrociouslest young ooman I ever see!

CEL. But you seem low, Florio.

FLOR. I am low, Celestine. Business is nowhere; there hasn't been a fire in the neighbourhood for weeks.

CEL. No fire?

FLOR. Not one. I don't know what London's coming to. I haven't worked at a conflagration since I don't know when; and I have lost all my practice.

Bob. (aside). Here's a scoundrel, if you like!

FLOR. I remember the time when we had two or three good fires a week, and that was the time for you! Why Jem and Watson and I used to make quite a mint from the sufferers—rushing about everywhere—into the thickest of the flames—getting out the furniture—dropping children out of window sometimes—

Bob. (aside). Why he's the bloodthirstiest in-cen-di-airy!

FLOR. I declare sometimes I've a mind to set light to the Post Office, just to procure work.

Bob. (aside). The very first thing to-morrow morning, off I goes to St. Martin's le Grand. A nod's as good as a wink to a blind Postmaster General.

CEL. Well, Florio, come and help me to lay the cloth. Here are the things in the next room; and we shall have a little time to chat as well as work, before Polly returns.

[They go off, &c. Bob, watching them off, then gets out of basket.]

Bob. This is the out-and-outest case I ever come nigh on. The young ooman she commits murder; the young feller he indulges in arson! To vary the monotony, he pitches furniture and children out o' winder! I wonder what she and young Blazes are a concocting, of now? Probably manslaughter for a change. They shan't get hold of that Body though—not if I know it. No; if there is evidence to be given in a court of justice or a nisi prius to be established, or an afterdavid, or anything o' that sort, let it be complete. So you come along with me.

[Seizes the box, and creeps with it under the table on the left side. Enter CELESTINE and FLORIO with dinner things; they proceed to lay the cloth.]

CEL. By the way—I quite forgot. Florio, what did you mean by sending that friend of yours this morning with some message about the theatre?

FLOR. I send a friend!

CEL. Certainly; he came from you. And—why, I put him away into the clothes-basket, and here he—no, he isn't! I left him here.

FLOR. Nonsense.

CEL. I tell you I left the man in the clothes-basket—in hiding.

FLOR. Left a man in hiding! Celestine—unhappy, faithless, treacherous girl—away!

CEL. No, no—oh, Florio!

FLOR. Away, deceitful traitress, away! A man—a rival—a favoured rival! I renounce you.

CEL. Oh, Florio, hear me! (aside). Oh, he's jealous, like the rightful heir in "Amanda the Abandoned," when his stepmother's brother is found up the chimney. I must appeal to his sensibilities. (aloud). Nay, Florio, hear me—you must—you shall! Imprudent I may have been; for when could woman's eye behold a noble head doomed to the dungeon—perchance the scaffold—and a woman's tears not flow for the sufferer? Guilty I am not—I swear by yon star in the eternal blue—the star, you have often called it, of our unchanging love. By that—by my sighs—by the heart thou hast crushed with unworthy doubt—I am not the thing you name!

FLOR. I have read those remarks so often in the Circulating Library that they have lost the charm of freshness.

Bob. (aside). Young Blazes and she are going it! There'll be a mutual assassination before long.

CEL. (descending to commonplace). Well, Florio; this is how it was. Some person came here with a long rigmarole; I thought he came from you; Polly nearly surprised us; I got him to hide in the basket; and he apparently is gone. It was a BLUNDER on both sides.

FLOR. If I thought it was a blunder—

CEL. Oh, it was a blunder; depend upon it. Hush! Mercy on me, there's Polly back again, before I expected her! Oh, Florio, haste, quick, get in here—get under the table!

FLOR. Well, but—

CEL. For my sake—for the love you bear me—get underneath!

[He creeps under on the right side, and CELESTINE runs off L.]

FLOR. By George! there's something under the table.

Bob. Speaking professionally, I should say we was full inside.

FLOR. Why, its somebody under the table?

Bob. Body—oh, lor, don't say that!

FLOR. I distinctly feel his leg.

Bob. Stop—hold hard—that's my leg.

FLOR. (putting his head through the tablecloth L.) Your leg?

Bob. (ditto, ditto, &c.) Yes, my leg.

FLOR. And you're the person under the table, eh?

Bob. I am that much crushed party. And though I may say that I've seen many full insides in my time, what with rainy days and stout ladies and gentlemen what always do pre-dominate on rainy days, I never see so little space occupied by so much human nature as this tabule, with you and me as inside fares. You couldn't get outside to oblige a gentleman, could you?

FLOR. Hang it, sir! what do you mean? Who are you? Where do you come from?

Bob. Now, look here, Blazes; keep cool.

FLOR. Do you know you're committing a trespass in being in this house? Are you a thief, sir?

Bob. Now, come, you know; you're excited, you are.

FLOR. Are you a thief? Answer my question.

Bob. Well now, suppose I were?

FLOR. I'll have you arrested. Come out of that. Come into the devouring jaw of justice.

[He scrambles out and begins dragging at Bob.]

Bob. I say!

FLOR. Come into the devouring jaw of justice!

Bob. You leave alone the jaw of justice, and hold your own. Give over—give over, I say; or I'm hanged if I don't pitch into you, [He gets up.]

FLOR. I intend handing you over to the police.

Bob. (aside). Well, this is the coolest setter-a-fire of other people's houses, and slaughterer of other people's infants I ever see. (aloud.) Why you abominable, dreadful, per-werted, spontaneous combustionner, you! You talk of police? When you think of your crimes, I wonder you don't shudder whenever you see an elmet.

FLOR. An elmet!

Bob. Yes, an—(aside). Oh, he's got one hisself, and thinks I mean his. (aloud.) A collar then, with D 406 on it; and above it a hi like Mars to threaten and command a Station! This way.

[Imitates the civic autocrat.]

FLOR. All this shall avail you nothing. You're a vagabond! How came you under that table?

Bob. Well, and how came you under, if it comes to that?

FLOR. Why, I was requested to get under.

Bob. Ah; by the—the young criminal.

FLOR. The what?

Bob. The youthful Lady Audley there, I know. Now I'll answer your question. So was I!

FLOR. What!

Bob. (confidentially). The fair destroyer of parties who trust themselves in her company and in band-boxes—the same young 'ooman that asked you to get under there asked me.

FLOR. What, my Celestine!

Bob. Your Celestine, eh? You're a nice pair, both of you. Ah, your Celestine, then.

FLOR. She asked you to get under that—

Bob. That tabule. Decidually.—Hullo, what's the matter?

FLOR. (gasping). Ha, hah! Oh nothing—nothing of any consequence. Only the death gurgle; you needn't mention it; it'll soon be over (chokes).

Bob. Bronchitis, eh?

FLOR. No—agony! My heart is in my mouth.

Bob. Well, gulp it down again. Here, let me hit your back.

FLOR. Oh, this is a bitter cup!

Bob. Ah, you've been drinking, I see. Something gone the wrong way.

FLOR. (wildly). No—yes—Celestine—she's gone the wrong way. Oh false, false—fickle—foolish—frensiéd—fudge!

Bob. (aside). Blazes has been at it this morning, he has!

FLOR. (seizing him by the collar). Villain!

Bob. Hallo!

FLOR. Oh, villain! Oh treacherous, wretcherous, muddy, maudlin villain! You have turned her affections from me—you have weaned her love from me—you—you have weaned my Venus! Tempter—despoiler—distorter—disguster, I've got my eye on you!

Bob. Yes, and it'll be a black one, soon, if you don't take it off. Now git along, will you! (pushes him away).

FLOR. (sees the box under the table). What's this?

Bob. Hi! put that down—you're not going to carry off the evidence of your crime—I mean of her crime—like that. Drop it.

FLOR. Of—of her crime? Hah-hah! (chokes again). No matter. Oh, how I loathe life!

Bob. Do you? I don't. I say, aren't you hungry?

FLOR. Horribly.

Bob. So am I. Suppose we have something to eat?

FLOR. Never! I shall never eat again—never eat and never work, till I come to perish!

Bob. Pooh, you mean till you come to the parish. Dinner 'll soon be here; we'll stop and dine.

FLOR. Hideous mockery!

Bob. Not at all, beef and pudding I'm sure.

FLOR. I could not sit at table with her.

Bob. Well, get under it then. Suppose we both go back.

FLOR. What under that—And yet it is a good idea. Her friend 'll soon be here; they 'll dine; I will be the unseen witness of their converse; her friend perhaps will betray her perfidy. Yes I will test the abandoned Celestine. This table shall be my tester.

Bob. Tester? Bah! a bedstead would be better. There, are you comfortable?

[They get underneath.]

FLOR. (hollowly). I shall never be comfortable again.

Bob. Oh, yes you will, after dinner. Hush!

[Enter CELESTINE and POLLY, L., with food from bakehouse.]

POLLY. Now, dear, make haste and lay the cloth, while—oh, the cloth is laid.

CEL. Yes—I—I laid it.

POLLY. And set all the knives on the left hand side and the forks on the right. Why, what a mess the table is in! What have you been thinking of?

CEL. (pettishly). Good gracious, Polly, you're very particular with your knives and forks. Surely you might do with them as you find them, once in a way.

POLLY. Why Celestine!

CEL. Well, what now?

POLLY. You're out of temper, dear.

CEL. No I'm not, dear.

POLLY. Oh, indeed!

CEL. Yes, indeed. And what then?

POLLY. Oh, nothing!

CEL. Very well, miss. You set the dinner, and never mind me.

POLLY. You're high-tempered, miss.

CEL. No I'm not, miss.

POLLY. Yes you are, miss.

CEL. Creature!

POLLY. Thing!

CEL. Why, she's beneath me!

POLLY. I shall have nothing to say to her.

CEL. I won't bemean myself by speaking to her.

POLLY. M-m-m!

CEL. M-m-m-m!

[They both sit at table at opposite sides, and help each other silently. As they neglect their food, a hand emerges from each side and transfers the contents of the plates respectively to the mouths beneath the table.]

POLLY. (aside). Well, I must say, Celestine's melancholy has not destroyed her appetite.

CEL. (aside). What a voracious eater that girl is.

POLLY. (screaming). Hah! What's that?

CEL. What?

POLLY. Something touched me. There's something under the table.

CEL. No, no—absurd! (Aside). He'll be discovered. (Aloud). It's—I think it's only a cricket. I've a pet cricket, which sometimes hops about, and—

POLLY. A cricket, Celestine, doesn't tread on folks' corns; unless, indeed, he's a corn craik—oh, mercy! what is it?

[They rise hurriedly.]

CEL. No, no, don't look there—oh, if you love me, don't look!

POLLY. Nonsense—come out, cricket!

CEL. Oh, Polly!

POLLY. Oh, folly! [Looks under table.] Gracious it's a man! [drags out FLORIO.]

CEL. Two men! [drags out BOB.]

CEL. Drop my young man!

FLOR. Drop my young woman!

BOB. Drop my box!

FLOR. I repudiate my young manhood; I am no longer her young man.

POLLY. I repudiate his boxhood; it's my box.

BOB. You're box!

POLLY. Certainly. Its contents are mine.

BOB. What, the Body?

POLLY. Yes, the body—a red one; I can describe it.

BOB. (groaning). A gory body—oh, this is horrible!

POLLY. Made tight about the waist.

BOB. Ah, he were a slim 'un, I suppose, when he were alive. Give it here—give here the atrocious proof of the guilt of a whole household! And now for the Old Bailey,

[Seizes Box and makes for the door, L.]

FLOR. Stop, sir! You have not accounted to me for the wrong you've done me. How came you here at all?

BOB. What, you're at it again? Why she knows.

CEL. No, Florio, no, believe him not—I never knew

him till he came, purporting to be your messenger with a commission concerning the theatre.

BOB. I a commissioner? I deny it.

FLOR. Infamous villain—mendacious wretch—retract, or your blood—

BOB. My blood's up—that's all about my blood; now then! And if you will be abusive, come on.

POLLY. I shall faint!

CEL. I shan't, till I see that man prostrate. Go on, Florio—bravo, Florio!

FLOR. Revenge—madness—intoxication! Ha, a weapon! (Rushes up stage, and seizes the gun in corner). Now, sir, your time has come—or mine. I am armed; you are not: but I scorn to take a life so loathsome while it is undefended. Have you a halfpenny about you?

BOB. I have; a duffer, which a gen'lm'n of the seafaring persuasion palmed off on me last night between Obun Ill and the Bank.

FLOR. Then, we'll toss. Two out of three, and the loser perishes.

CEL. and } Oh heavens!

POLLY. }

FLOR. Silence—do you accept?

BOB. Well, as I shall get murdered if I don't and killed if I do, it is a toss-up altogether. Go on.

FLOR. (tossing). Show.

BOB. (ditto). Tails.

FLOR. Wrong: it ain't. One to me.

POLLY. Unfortunate young man!

BOB. I'm down this time.

FLOR. Tails.

BOB. O joy, it's an ed!—Oh agony it's a tail! I am down indeed!

CEL. I breathe again.

BOB. (in a hollow tone.) And one more wictim is a being added to the long list! I am to die—to sleep—to go downhill with the skid off—that awful hill which horse-flesh is heir to—into the deep Walley of the Shudder! To be cut off from your regular route, and set to your account with all your undelivered fares upon your head! Oh—I am too young to die! (Breaks down, but recovers.) This however is weakness, and disgraces a member of the Citizen line. I'm ready; only let me dispose of a few effects. (Takes off his badge.) This is a heirloom; I return it to the company, with a request that they'll think of me, when I am in the silent sepulchre. This, Miss (to Polly), is a lock of hair—horsehair; it belonged to a favourite leader, which fell a prey to glanders. I cut it off his tail in his youth, my own being short—I mean my own ed of air. Take it, in memory of one who—who thought there was something in your face that reminded him of that old orse. This is a penny warbler; in it is the date of my birth. (To Florio.) If you will kindly add the date of my death and keep it, it may serve to distract your

accusing conscience when brooding over the remembrance of your crimes. Tell Bill (who drives our BUS) as how I died unhappy, deeply regretting to my last breath that I ever lent him that two and sixpence which I shall never see on earth again. And now have the kindness to fire, and aim for the centre of my mortal coil about the brain.

FLOR. Stop! The discovery that the BLUNDER-BUS is unloaded induces me to defer letting it off, and suggests the thought that I may let you off instead. Further reflection induces me to forgive you, under Christian circumstances.

BOB. Thank'ee; though I don't understand the circumstances, I accept them, and the same to you and many of 'em.

POLLY. Stay; (to Bob) there is something in your face—

BOB. A smut?

POLLY. No, an expression—which reminds me of last night. Do you conduct a bus?

BOB. I do.

POLLY. All the way?

BOB. For tuppence.

POLLY. Last night I entered it.

BOB. And left a Box?

POLLY. Yes, which is here. It was you who brought it back?

BOB. It was. But that Box contains—a—alas a Body!

POLLY. And skirt. Behold it. [Pulls out a dress.]

BOB. Oh, avenging ministers of the Old Bailey, it ain't a dissected one after all!

CEL. Then it was about this Box you called this morning?

POLLY. That is all explained. But, Celestine, who is this gentleman? [indicating FLORIO.]

CEL. Forgive me, Polly—he's—he's—a very respectable Fireman, who has lit a flame in my bosom.

FLOR. Which the hose of distrust shall never again put out.

BOB. Fireman! What, young Blazes? Why that accounts—Blazes, I beg your pardon; and if Polly will only consent to smile on a humble but perfectly independent conductor of a tuppenny, she will find in him a constant conductor through life, who is without change towards his fair. And we'll be married at the parish church of (looking at his extremities)—of Bow.

FLOR. Agreed, Polly; say agreed.

POLLY. Well, well; my wishes in the matter, like some of your omnibuses, correspond.

CEL. That's well; all is satisfactorily settled, and mistake as it was, we have derived some profit from the Blunder—

BOB. And the Bus—

FLOR. And the Blunderbus.

TRIO—"THIS HAPPY OCCASION."

[They go to table and fill their glasses.]

Allegretto.

1st VOICE. 1. Up - on this happy oc - ca - sion, oc - ca - sion, oc - ca - sion, Come

2nd VOICE. 1. Up - on this happy oc - ca - sion, oc - ca - sion, oc - ca - sion, Come

3rd & 4th VOICES. 1. Up - on this happy oc - ca - sion, oc - ca - sion, oc - ca - sion, Come

PIANO.

let us pour a li - ba - tion, And pass the hours in glee... Hap - py Christmas, what a trea - sure, Would that it more frequent came.

let us pour a li - ba - tion, And pass the hours in glee...

let us pour a li - ba - tion, And pass the hours in glee.,

(Drinks.) Here's to it, and all its plea - sure. (Drinks.) Ma - ny happy re - turns of the same! Ah! ... Up - on this hap - py oc - ca - sion, oc -

Ah! ... Ah! ... Ah! ...

ca - sion, oc - ca - sion, Come, let us pour a li - ba - tion, And pass the hours in glee! And pass the hours in glee!

... Come, let us pour a li - ba - tion, And pass the hours in glee, in glee! And pass the hours in glee!

... Come, let us pour a li - ba - tion, And pass the hours in glee, in glee! And pass the hours in glee!

2ND VERSE.

And ere we ring down the curtain,
Of your smiles let us be certain:
Then joyous we shall be!

- 1ST VOICE. Love is better than a Bank full,
To the home of man and wife;
2ND VOICE. Now, my dear, I hope you're thankful?
3RD VOICE. Happiest moment it is of my life!

NOTE.—The dressing of the Charade is simple. A blue serge coat, or, if preferred, a simple red shirt and helmet for the Fireman; a slightly damaged overcoat, comforter, tight trousers, low-crowned hat, and badge for the Conductor; a plain sempstress's dress for the Ladies, and a bonnet and shawl apiece—will suffice. The scene may be partitioned off into one end of a drawing-room, for the exits are only right and left; no doors in the scene are required. The properties needful are a square table, a large clothes basket, a blunderbuss, a table-cloth, two plates, a couple of knives and forks, a meat pie, a plum pudding, bottle and glasses, and a bandbox in which is found a red-bodied dress.

As a difficulty occurs in dropping the curtain twice during any short play of consecutive action, it may be explained to the audience that the Charade is enunciated in order of syllables—the first, the second, and the whole—while the piece is progressing.

Pastime.

CONUNDRUMS.

1. Why is a vocalist singing incorrectly like a forger of bad paper? Because he is uttering false notes.
2. When is cricket first mentioned in Scripture? When Peter stood up with the eleven and was bowled.
3. How many young ladies would it take to reach from Edinburgh to London, a distance of 400 miles? Why 400, of course; because a Miss is as good as a mile.
4. Why are you likely to miss a train going at 12.50? Because it's 10 to 1 if you catch it.
5. What is the value of a curtsy from Queen Victoria? 19s.; for it's a bob from a sovereign.
6. When is banking first mentioned in Scripture? When Moses gave Pharaoh a check on the bank of the Red Sea—and crossed it.
7. Why shouldn't one perish in the desert? Because of the sand which is there.
8. When is a soldier not a soldier? When he is mustard.
9. Why would you suppose Charles I. consented to be beheaded? Because he was axed whether he would or not.
10. What labels in a confectioner's window would a man bitten by a mad dog be most likely to read? Water I sees (*ices*) and I screams (*ice creams*).
11. What does a man-of-war weigh with all her crew and guns on board? Her anchor.
12. Why may not a man marry his widow's second cousin? Because he can't—he's dead.
13. What circus holds the most horses in the world? Regent Circus.
14. Why is a reckless fellow like a man stabbing at a shadow? Because he sticks at nothing.
15. Why is a clock excessively modest? Because it always holds its hands before its face; and, although its works be good, is continually running itself down.
16. Why does the Queen show curious equestrian tastes? Because she prefers Cowes to Ryde.
17. Why may not the proprietor of a forest fell his own timber? Because no one is allowed to cut when it is his own deal.
18. Why is a person undergoing the water cure like a ship in a storm? Because he is under wet sheets.
19. Why do white sheep eat more than black sheep? Because there are more of them.
20. Why is 1860 like 1862? Because the one is 1860 and the other is 186 (2) too.
21. What two letters denote extreme cold? I, C (*icy*).
22. By taking the tail off an officer's feather, what fruit will be left? Take *c* from *plume*, and there will be left *plum*.
23. What is the difference between a butcher and a fashionably attired young lady? The one kills to dress, the other dresses to kill.
24. Why should turtles be more pitied than any other animal? Because theirs is a very hard case.
25. What trade was the man who killed William Rufus? A Bill sticker.
26. Why is a man who has just carried his carpet bag ashore from a steamboat like an owner of the soil? Because he is possessed of landed property.
27. Why is a miser like a man with a short memory? Because he is always forgetting (for getting).
28. Why is a pig in a parlour like a house on fire? Because the sooner it is put out the better.
29. If a pair of spectacles could speak, what ancient historian would they name? Eusebius (you see by us).
30. Why is a periodical like the blood of a healthy man? Because very much depends upon its circulation.
31. What river in England is what naughty boys and girls do? Tees (tease).
32. What three letters will give the name of a famous Roman general? C, P, O (Scipio).
33. Why are the letters B and D like England and Ireland? Because there is a C (see) between them.
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'Twas neither fish, flesh, fowl, or bone,
And I kept it till it ran alone.

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And Ned's whole heart is wee little Kate's,
But me he tenderly loves, 'tis said,
And she as bitterly hates.
The Reverend Rector loves me too
For what I give when his company dine,
And when he has quaffed of bottles a few,
We are both well filled with wine.
I lie in your homes, through your streets I go,
To fire and water I belong;
I burst, I freeze, I overflow,
I am always going wrong.
In the northern heather where winds are shrill
And the Gaels are ranged in battle array,
I sound the pibroch over the hill,
And the clans rush down to the fray.

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Pastime.

CONUNDRUMS.

1. Why is a vocalist singing incorrectly like a forger of bad paper? Because he is *uttering false notes*.
2. When is cricket first mentioned in Scripture? When Peter stood up with the eleven and was *bowled*.
3. How many young ladies would it take to reach from Edinburgh to London, a distance of 400 miles? Why 400, of course; because a Miss is as good as a mile.
4. Why are you likely to miss a train going at 12.50? Because it's 10 to 1 if you catch it.
5. What is the value of a curtsy from Queen Victoria? 19s.; for it's a bob from a sovereign.
6. When is banking first mentioned in Scripture? When Moses gave Pharaoh a check on the bank of the Red Sea—and crossed it.
7. Why shouldn't one perish in the desert? Because of the *sand which is there*.
8. When is a soldier not a soldier? When he is mustard.
9. Why would you suppose Charles I. consented to be beheaded? Because he was axed whether he would or not.
10. What labels in a confectioner's window would a man bitten by a mad dog be most likely to read? Water I sees (*ices*) and I screams (*ice creams*).
11. What does a man-of-war weigh with all her crew and guns on board? Her anchor.
12. Why may not a man marry his widow's second cousin? Because he can't—he's dead.
13. What circus holds the most horses in the world? Regent Circus.
14. Why is a reckless fellow like a man stabbing at a shadow? Because he *sticks* at nothing.
15. Why is a clock excessively modest? Because it always holds its hands before its face; and, although its works be good, is continually running itself down.
16. Why does the Queen show curious equestrian tastes? Because she prefers Cowes to Ryde.
17. Why may not the proprietor of a forest fell his own timber? Because no one is allowed to *cut* when it is his own *deal*.
18. Why is a person undergoing the water cure like a ship in a storm? Because he is under *wet sheets*.
19. Why do white sheep eat more than black sheep? Because there are more of them.
20. Why is 1860 like 1862? Because the one is 1860 and the other is 186 (2) too.
21. What two letters denote extreme cold? I, C (*icy*).
22. By taking the tail off an officer's feather, what fruit will be left? Take *c* from *plume*, and there will be left *plum*.
23. What is the difference between a butcher and a fashionably attired young lady? The one *kills to dress*, the other *dresses to kill*.
24. Why should turtles be more pitied than any other animal? Because theirs is a very *hard case*.
25. What trade was the man who killed William Rufus? A *Bill* sticker.
26. Why is a man who has just carried his carpet bag ashore from a steamboat like an owner of the soil? Because he is possessed of *landed* property.
27. Why is a miser like a man with a short memory? Because he is always forgetting (for getting).
28. Why is a pig in a parlour like a house on fire? Because the sooner it is put out the better.
29. If a pair of spectacles could speak, what ancient historian would they name? Eusebius (you see by us).
30. Why is a periodical like the blood of a healthy man? Because very much depends upon its circulation.
31. What river in England is what naughty boys and girls do? Tees (tease).
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